Property of
CBPL
Please return to
Graduate Theological
Union Library

99
109

THE CHURCH YEAR PULPIT LIBRARY

THE CHURCH YEAR PULPIT LIBRARY

In Twelve Volumes

I

ADVENT SUNDAYS

II

ADVENT COURSES—CHRISTMASTIDE

III

EPIPHANY AND FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD SUNDAYS AFTER

IV

EPIPHANY: FOURTH, FIFTH, AND SIXTH SUNDAYS AFTER—SEPTUAGESIMA

V

SEXAGESIMA—SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

VI

LENT: THIRD, FOURTH, AND FIFTH SUNDAYS—PASSIONTIDE

VII

EASTER DAY AND FIRST SUNDAY AFTER

VIII

EASTER: SECOND SUNDAY AFTER—ASCENSION DAY

IX

WHITSUNDAY — TRINITY: FIRST AND SECOND SUNDAYS AFTER

X

TRINITY: THIRD TO NINTH SUNDAYS AFTER

XI

TRINITY: TENTH TO THIRTEENTH SUNDAYS AFTER

XII

TRINITY: FOURTEENTH TO TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAYS AFTER—HOLY DAYS

THE CHURCH YEAR PULPIT LIBRARY

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY
FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY
SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY
THE SUNDAY CALLED SEPTUAGESIMA
HOLY DAYS

F. M. BARTON COMPANY
PUBLISHERS
CLEVELAND AND NEW YORK

Property of
CBPL
Please return to
Graduate Theological
Union Library

BV
4223
C52
1900z
v.4

PACIFIC LUTHERAN
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
THE LIBRARY

15869

Contents

PAGE

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY—

1. Complete Sermon, ... 1
2. Outlines on the Epistle, ... 5
3. Outlines on the Gospel, ... 11
4. Outlines on the Lessons, ... 23
5. Outlines for the Day on Various Passages of Scripture, ... 26
6. Illustrations, ... 33

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY—

1. Complete Sermon, ... 36
2. Outlines on the Epistle, ... 41
3. Outlines on the Gospel, ... 44
4. Outlines on the Lessons, ... 54
5. Outlines for the Day on Various Passages of Scripture, ... 60
6. Illustrations, ... 61

CONTENTS

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY—

PAGE

1. Complete Sermon, ... 65
2. Outlines on the Epistle, ... 73
3. Outlines on the Gospel, ... 92
4. Outlines on the Lessons, ... 96
5. Outlines for the Day on Various Passages of Scripture, ... 104
6. Illustrations, ... 115

THE SUNDAY CALLED SEPTUAGESIMA—

1. Complete Sermon, ... 118
2. Outlines on the Epistle, ... 123
3. Outlines on the Gospel, ... 144
4. Outlines on the Lessons, ... 161
5. Outlines for the Day on Various Passages of Scripture, ... 200
6. Illustrations, ... 203

HOLY DAYS—

Saint Stephen, ... 208
Saint John the Evangelist, ... 213
The Holy Innocents' Day, ... 242
The Circumcision of Christ, ... 251
Conversion of Saint Paul, ... 258
The Purification of Saint Mary the Virgin, . . 266

SERMONS, OUTLINES AND ILLUSTRATIONS
FOR SUNDAYS AND HOLY DAYS

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE	ROM. XIII. 1-7.
GOSPEL	S. MATT. VIII. 23-34.
FIRST MORNING LESSON	JOB XXVII.
FIRST EVENING LESSON	JOB XXVIII. OR XXIX.
SECOND LESSONS	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

Christ Stilling the Tempest.

Then He arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. S. LUKE viii. 24.

HE whole passage is beautiful in its allegorical meaning. They were all in the boat going across to the other side, the side whither Jesus had bidden them go, and Jesus Himself was with them in the boat. What could be safer? What could be happier?

'But as they sailed, He fell asleep,' and while he slept—only while He slept, it all turned on His sleeping or waking—'there came down a storm of wind'—the original word means an earthquake, a storm like an earthquake—'upon the lake, and they were filled'—or rather, they were being filled—'with water, and they were in jeopardy.'

The disciples had not faith enough not to be afraid; but they had faith enough to see that it was the fact of Jesus being asleep which made the danger. Therefore they woke Him—'Master, Master, we perish!'

Let us pause here a moment. From one side to the other, over the waves of this troublesome world—as we were taught to call it at

our baptism, when we set out, we are all crossing. And I may say of all of you, in a certain sense, Jesus is in you. You carry with you a presence. Should not all life be a quiet progress? Whence, then, those violent agitations which you feel in your mind? Why are you sometimes so hindered upon your way, and everything is against you? Why is your soul so strangely, and often so fiercely tossed? I answer, that Jesus, who is in you, is asleep; in other words, grace is dormant. And in this case, remember, you are responsible for it; you have not kept the religious principle, which God put in you, awake and active. Hence, affections are heavy; prayers are drowsy; the spiritual life is weak and failing; religion is an unreal thing; therefore you are subjected to the outer world; therefore you are driven up and down, and there is no rest, and your salvation is imperilled. What then, must you do? Stir up the Christ that is in you. The trouble is sent for this very purpose—to excite you. You are learning what a living Saviour can be in a man. Only resuscitate that divine element which God has placed in your soul; and as it awakes, and puts forth its energies, all which could really hurt you—fear, and danger, and all evil, will roll over and cease to be.

Depend upon it, it is now as it was then. It is the Jesus asleep, or the Jesus awake in you, which makes all the difference of a happy or an unhappy, a safe or an unsafe, a calm or a troubled voyage of life.

It was a glorious spectacle when Christ arose. He stood up, just as Stephen, before he died, saw Him standing up in heaven—a champion, to defend and avenge His people. Then He arose, and His first thought was to still the storm; it was His second to reprove His disciples—'Where is your faith?'

Remember this. Remember this when you have to do with sinners in trouble. First, do them good; first comfort them, relieve them of their distress, place them, as far as in you lies, in peace; then deal with their faults; then be as faithful as you like.

There is much in that expression that 'Christ rebuked the wind and the waves.' You will miss a great part of the intention of the incident, if you merely look upon it as a miracle of stilling a tempest.

Why did Christ 'rebuke' the elements? The word appears to me the language of one who either sees moral guilt; or who, in His affection, is indignant at something which is hurting those He loves.

The elements, in themselves, cannot, of course, do a moral wrong. But is it possible that the prince of the power of the air had anything to do with that storm? Was there some latent, fiendish malice in that sudden outbreak of nature upon Christ and His

Church? And may that power be given to Satan? And was Christ indeed ejecting an evil spirit, when He did just what He always did, and said just what He always said, when He was dealing with those who were possessed with devils—He 'rebuked' them?

But however this may be, there is another aspect in which we ought to see it. We know that to the Second Adam there was given just what the first Adam forfeited—perfect dominion over all creation. 'Thou madest Him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.'

Accordingly, Christ was careful, one after another, to assert and show His supremacy over the whole natural creation—over the fishes, as when He made them crowd at His word to a given spot; over the swine; over the fig-tree; over the earth, opening at His will; over the seas, unlearning their usual law, and making a pavement for His feet. In this light the present hurricane was like a rebellion, or Christ treated it as such, that He might show His mastership. Hence that royal word, 'He rebuked them,' and hence, the instant submission.

But it might be, in His affection for His followers, as of one angry at what was disturbing their peace, He rebuked those troubled winds. For God is very jealous for His children's happiness; and whatever touches it He is displeased at. You may be assured of this—if you are a child of God, and any person or any thing ever comes near to injure or to distress you, God is grieved with that person or that thing—He will rebuke it.

And not with your sorrows only, but with that worst of all sorrows, sin. If you have a child, and your child does anything wrong, your thought is not so much that your child has touched sin, as that sin has dared to touch your child. This is true to every parent's heart. It is to God's. He may and He will rebuke you for the evil you do; but He will quite as much rebuke the evil which has touched you. This is a very comforting view, and it is a perfectly right view for a child of God to take, when he has sinned. 'Jesus rebuked the winds and the waves.'

The winds were the emblem of the external influences which affect and harass; the waves of the inward heavings and distresses which those external influences produce upon the mind: the winds, the active, evil agencies of life; the waves, the consequences of the trials, when they fall upon you; because, as the wave answers to the wind, rising or falling with its swell or subsidence, so do our weak hearts beat or be still, and respond sensibly to the ills about us.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

It is well for us to remember that Christ has respect to both, sees both, addresses Himself to both—the wind that blows too roughly without, and the wave of feeling which that wind awakes, and which rolls too darkly within us. And He can do as He pleases; He can silence the wind, and lay the wave at the same moment; or He can let the wind blow on, but not a ripple rise upon the heart which He has hushed.

No one, I suppose, questions, that it was no common calm which at Jesus's word, succeeded to that storm. S. Matthew and S. Mark both call it 'a great calm.' I am not sure whether S. Luke's simple, uncomparative term is not still stronger—'and there was a calm.'

Doubtless, the serenity which Christ made after the storm, and out of the storm, was much deeper than the serenity which preceded it, and it was a calmer sea on which they reached that other side, than the sea on which they had set out on their way that morning.

Do not wish exemption from evil, neither from sorrow, nor yet from temptation. Immunity from grief is not half as great as God's consolation under it. Exemption is not the true peace, but deliverance, victory, the peace which Christ makes out of the materials of our troubles; the silenced fear, the subdued restlessness, the sealed pardon, the interposing grace, the triumph of an omnipotent love. Who will regret the struggles and the perils of the mid-way passage from childhood to the grave? The evening's peace is better than the morning's brightness; and very often the stillest sunset succeeds the thunderstorm. It is not the innocency of infancy which most glorifies God, but it is the sanctity of age. To have a sin perfectly forgiven is sweeter than to have never sinned; just as much as to enter heaven by Christ will be happier than to enter it of ourselves. To have thoroughly conquered an evil habit is better than to have never known it. And all the heavy tossings and bitter blasts which meet us by the way, through the power of Jesus, go to make the peacefulness of a dying hour, and the repose of eternity.

Blessed Jesus! to Thee only it belongeth to still Thy people's hearts. The enemy may come in like a flood, but if Thou art wakeful for me, his fury is harmless, and his power dies. All things, above, beneath, and around me, may conspire against me, but if Thou enshrine me in Thy love, my heaviest sorrow is my safest sanctuary.

Dear Jesus! if Thou art mine, and I be Thine, I shall not be greatly moved; the waters are still deep, very deep; but the tumult of my heart is passed; it is calm now; I shall soon be across!

JAMES VAUGHAN.

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE.

Love and Justice.

For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. ROMANS xiii. 3, 4.

N the later portion of the Epistle to the Romans S. Paul lays down practical rules for the guidance of everyday life and work. They are the application of the same principles in which he had been instructing them in the early portion of the Epistle. In doing this he is mindful of differences which people are apt to overlook. The motive which should govern a man in all his personal relations is one thing; the motive which should govern a state is something different. As to the relations of men to one another, he says, 'Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.' But when he comes to speak of the state and its rulers, and of the principles on which its rulers should act, he speaks in very different tones. They are to remember that their powers are ordained of God, and that every soul is to be subject to them. So directly are they the representatives of God that they are revengers to execute wrath upon them that do evil, and whosoever resisteth them resisteth the ordinance of God. Moreover, rulers are to be a terror to evildoers, and because of the source and origin of their power Christian people are to obey them as a matter of conscience, and not merely from fear of the evil consequences which may follow from disobedience. For the like reasons they are to render 'tribute unto whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.'

At the present day there is danger lest the distinction drawn by the Apostle should be forgotten; there is a kindly, sentimental way of looking at evildoers that is always striving to see faults in the laws, or those who administer them, and little or none in those who disobey them.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

I. Let us examine more closely the principles laid down by the Apostle, and the reasons which should guide individuals in their private capacity, and those which should guide the actions of rulers. It is obvious that our relations one to another are quite different from those in which we are all to the State. We are not responsible one for the other, but to a certain extent the state is responsible for us all. When we will we can sever our relations one from the other, but so long as we live in the land we cannot do so from the state. And it may be well to note whether our own experience does not show that those whose own life is most governed by the principle of love are not the very people who are most earnest in desiring that justice should be the distinguishing characteristic of the dealings of the state with its subjects; whilst those who most eagerly claim that the operation of the state should be regulated by a rule more kindly towards evildoers than that of justice, are the very people whose own actions are least marked by appreciation of others, and show the smallest love in their treatment of others.

II. But the Apostle evidently realised, as all experience has proved to be the fact, that in every age there would be evildoers; that the tendency towards wrong-doing in the human heart is so strong that always there will be many to yield to it. When it bursts forth into action how is it to be treated? To yield to it, and let it go unrestrained, would leave the righteous portion of the community as defenceless sheep amongst a pack of wolves. For successful wrong-doing encourages other wrong-doing. Lawlessness rapidly leads on to confusion and anarchy, and the men guilty of such acts speedily reach a state when conscience has no influence, and when the only restraining power is fear—the dread of a superior power which can inflict punishment. There is need, therefore, for rulers armed with the sword of justice. A righteous God has never willed that the thief and murderer should have their own way in the world, and so, whilst restraining individuals from inflicting punishment on those who have done them a wrong, He has commissioned rulers to do what is necessary to hinder those who would commit crime from carrying out their purpose, or, if they succeed in doing wrong, then He has laid upon the rulers the duty of punishment.

III. At the same time it is obvious that the State is only called upon to act when individuals neglect to obey the rules designed for their good conduct. So long as we obey the laws we have nothing to fear from rulers; so long as we are just and true in all our dealings the law can have no terror for us, and the ruler's sword will remain quietly in its scabbard.

Of this we may rest assured, there is a Providence that governs

this life according to fixed principles. It does not step in supernaturally to avert the evils which spring from kindly feeling or generous principles, any more than to punish acts of selfishness, injustice, or harshness.

Upon Christians rests a double obligation. We are bound to exhibit in our daily life and conversation the strictest obedience to what our Lord and His Church have taught us. If in our own conduct it is seen that we are not guided by the principle of charity, and if in our public words or actions we do not manifest that deference to authority, that acceptance of the order of providence inculcated by Scripture, those who make no profession of religion justify to themselves and others what they say and do by what they hold to be our approval. DEAN GREGORY.

The Doctrine of Obedience.

Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. ROMANS xiii. 7.

I. NOTICE, first, as suggested by the passage generally, the breadth and largeness of the gospel precepts.

The Bible contains nothing of what is commonly called casuistry. It does not deal in cases of conscience. It supposes the minds of its readers to be capable of treating it rationally; of exercising good sense and sound judgment in its adaptation to varying and sometimes trying conjunctures.

People say, on reading this passage, S. Paul makes no exceptions here. He lays down a principle too broad for literal obedience. He says nothing here, for example, of bad rulers. He does not introduce, after the charge to obey human authorities, the words, 'So far as their own character is decently good, or their commands not clearly opposed to the law of justice and right.' He does not say, 'When conscience clashes with authority, then you must obey God rather than men.' No, he does not say this. And why? Because he is writing to Christian men, who know this well enough already. He is writing to those who showed by their lives, by their constancy (in many cases) even unto death, that they were well aware that, if the emergency should arise, they must be prepared to make any sacrifice, even that of life itself, rather than obey the command of a human ruler to dishonour or deny their Saviour.

Nor does S. Paul enter here into the case which has sometimes proved so perplexing, that of persons living in disturbed times, and called to witness, or even to take part in, a transfer of power, a

change of dynasty, a period of revolution, or of usurpation. He has laid down no rule as to the precise point at which authority becomes established; at which adhesion to the old becomes a senseless fanaticism, and allegiance to the new a rational and therefore also a Christian duty. These things have been found by experience to be not merely matters of anxiety and of peril, but questions too of right and wrong, upon which it was easy to err, and in which error was of no trivial import. But here also the precept must be broadly stated, and the application of it to circumstances left to the individual judgment. S. Paul knew that the Bible is not God's only gift to man. There is the gift of conscience too. There is the gift of intelligence and of practical wisdom. There is the gift, above all, of His Holy Spirit, whose bright shining within, in the hearts of those who believe, is a guide not less amidst the difficulties of God's Word than in the intricacies of human life and circumstance.

Nor does S. Paul in this passage enter into any of those distinctions, which sometimes have to be made, between the Christian's duty to particular rulers, and his duty to those higher laws by which they rule. No particular authority stands entirely isolated. 'By Me kings reign.' The power of every sovereign is limited by some law; if not by constitutional law, yet at least by human and by divine law; by those restrictions of common humanity and of religious responsibility, which are in one point of view checks upon the ruler, and in another point of view rights of the subject. S. Paul himself did not consider that he was precluded from urging his rights as a citizen in the bar of inhumanity and injustice. 'As they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?' He was not one of those who court martyrdom, though he met it bravely when it came to him. The preservation of life is a duty in its place. The maintenance of rights is a duty in its place. It is an act of suicide to disregard the one, and it is an act of treason to be indifferent to the other. When S. Paul speaks here of constituted authorities, he includes those higher laws under which all human rulers act, as well as the special and lower laws made under them. It is one of the most anxious questions for a Christian in certain times, how far he is justified in waiving rights which are a national birthright, in deference to edicts which derive their binding force from the very constitution which they violate. And nothing, assuredly, contained in this chapter calls upon any man to forego the exercise of powers conferred upon him by his own citizenship, and which as truly come under the description of powers that be, of authorities ordained of God, as the prerogatives of princes or the majesty of a throne.

II. Notice, in the second place, what I may describe as the wholesomeness of the gospel teaching.

There is nothing morbid in the Bible. It is written, in one sense, for the diseased; but, if so, it is written to bring them to health. It is written for the sinful, for the weak, for the tempted, for the often troubled and distressed; but it is not written for the perverse, for the crooked-minded, for the ingenious self-tormentor or the sophistical speculator.

Every one of Christ's precepts—this one first of all—tends to make earth a scene of order and tranquillity in the very same degree in which it teaches men to regard earth as a small and insignificant portion of the whole of their space and the whole of their time.

III. But now I must pass, in the third place, to a few practical suggestions upon the principle here laid down.

1. Amongst these I must place foremost the charge to carry it out consistently in all departments of life. Do not imagine that you have obeyed this inspired rule when you have refrained from disobedience or disloyalty towards the throne. Which of us is tempted to such acts? But observe how wide the charge is. Let every soul be subject to superior authorities: for there is no authority save from God: the authorities that exist are all ordained of God. Is not parental authority included here? Is not the authority of the master of a family recognised here? Is not the authority of every person towards whom we stand in a position of dependence or subordination asserted here? Does not the clergyman read here the divine warrant for the authority of his bishop in all things indifferent and in all things lawful?

2. Again, let us remember—that every relative duty has its correlative: if it is the duty of one to obey reverently, it must be the duty of another to rule well. Whatever be our position, however humble it may be in some aspects, yet, so far as it is one of authority, if it be but over a few servants, each one of us is, in the sense here designed, 'a minister of God,' 'an officer of God.' There is nothing presumptuous in taking that title. We do a great injury to ourselves when we restrict that title to one particular calling; to those who officiate in the Church as pastors and teachers. Every head of a family is a minister of God. Every parent is a minister of God. Every employer of workmen, every instructor of the young, every superintendent of an office, is a minister of God. In a yet higher sense is every one who holds office in the state, every one who presides over a department, every one who has a place in the legislature, a minister of God. It is not that we overestimate our positions: that is not the danger against which we need to be warned: it is rather that we undervalue them; we think it a part of humility to do so:

in reality it is often a cloak for worldliness, an excuse for shirking responsibility and avoiding those serious thoughts which a sense of responsibility brings after it. Of ourselves we cannot think too meanly; but we have the example and authority of S. Paul himself for magnifying our office.

3. Again, we must act upon the charge before us in small details. I will mention two of these.

Cheerfulness in bearing the burdens imposed upon us for the state-service. The laws of the country, in theory at least, give to the people a veto upon taxation. There is nothing wrong, therefore, in the constitutional and orderly exercise of that controlling power. But when discussion is ended, and the judgment of the legislature has decided upon a particular amount and form of impost, then there ought to be, on the part of all Christian subjects, a cheerfulness in paying. We ought to regard the burden as definitely and directly occasioned by God's gift to us of a constitutional government.

The other point I would mention is respectful language at all times about those in authority. A general loyalty of feeling is often made compatible with a great want of respect, in private conversation, towards the royal house, if not towards the royal person. This is much to be regretted. As Christians, we ought not to allow this in ourselves. The habit of retailing disrespectful and disparaging anecdotes, still more of imputing unworthy intentions and motives, as it is at all times a breach of the law of charity, so in this particular application of it, is a breach also of the rule of loyalty.

4. Once more, we are bound at all times to cherish, and from time to time more earnestly to express, a spirit of thankfulness to God Himself for what I have just called His gift to us of government. Any government is better than none. Any evils in government are less than the least of those evils from which the worst of governments releases us. No tyranny can be comparable in wretchedness to anarchy. S. Paul taught Christians to be thankful for the rule of a licentious, a cruel, and a heathen emperor. What would he have prescribed to us as the due measure of gratitude for a constitutional and a free government? for a throne of spotless purity in example, and of deep and lively sympathy with the people's joys and woes? for laws which recognise religion, maintain order, secure liberty, and coerce where they cannot extirpate crime? To give thanks to God for these things is the duty of every heart which is not most ungrateful.

5. I add one concluding word of exhortation. And this is, that we take a more lively interest than is, I fear, common amongst us, in those parts of our public worship which have a direct reference to

the persons of our rulers and to the deliberations of our legislature. We are all apt to slur over these portions of the service, these (as they are sometimes unhappily designated) state-prayers. Some persons complain of them as too long, too frequent. How cold is often the 'Amen' which closes the prayer for the Queen, the prayer for the Royal Family, the prayer for the Houses of Parliament! These things ought not so to be. S. Paul, if he were amongst us, would reprove such indifference. DEAN VAUGHAN.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL.

Our Refuge in Present Troubles.

And His disciples came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, Lord, save us, we perish. And He saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? S. MATTHEW viii. 25, 26.

I. THE Epiphany on this Sunday opens, as it were, into things on a larger scale. Last week we read of our Lord's manifesting Himself to single persons in the gospel; and the epistle spoke of our conduct as individuals. But to-day Christ is seen by us as God commanding the powers of nature, the winds and the waves; and afterwards, those still more vast powers of the unseen world, the evil spirits, whose name is Legion, possessing a great herd of more than two thousand swine, and hurrying them to destruction. And in like manner the epistle for to-day, although it is still taken in continuation from S. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, yet it falls in with this more enlarged view of Christ's manifestation, speaking of the powers ordained of God, or of governments of the world, and the duty of obedience on our part for conscience' sake. This agreement between the epistle and gospel is remarkable; for when persons introduce either of the incidents mentioned in the gospel, it is generally on the subject of national or public commotions; they put the two together, like the Psalmist when he says, 'Who stilleth the raging of the sea, and the noise of his waves, and the madness of the people.' And such an army of evil spirits entering into a multitude of animals by Christ's permission may well remind us of whole nations being influenced or possessed, as we sometimes see they are, by violent impulses and evil passions, setting forth the same thing as the former figure, 'the madness of the people.' Thus it is said, 'He sent evil angels among them.' Now such a lesson as this seems well calculated

to impress our minds with a readiness to receive all those parts of our duty which the epistle inculcates, to obey all ordinances of God, and so under His protection to possess our souls in patienee.

II. Let us draw together the epistle and gospel again into one practical lesson for this Sunday; as those who have been with Christ in these great and terrible miracles, let us sit at the Apostle's feet, and apply the faith thus derived to our own obedience, and to the blessed privilege of finding ourselves under His protection. Like the powers of mighty winds and waves which are kept in subjection by God for the harmony of nature; and as the powers of an infinite number of evil spirits are controlled and restrained by Almighty God, so the passions and desires of great multitudes are kept under by the same watchful Providence by means of rulers and laws, or else the powerful would devour the weak, and every one would be a prey to his neighbour. And when God allows them to break out from the spirit of disobedience, the effects are more fearful than those of any storm at sea, or any destruction of a herd of animals, as we well know from what has more than once taken place in a neighbouring country.

We live, it may be, in peace and quietness, yet in the midst of most fearful elements. It is not in the power of any of us to stop the violence of men's passions which bring on popular commotions and wars, any more than we can command the winds and waves in a storm; and if it should please God to let loose evil spirits as they will be unchained in the last days, it is not for any one of us to resist them, in whatever shape they may come upon us, whether by wars or otherwise; but this each one of us can do, we can by obedience obtain the protection of Christ, and hide us under the shelter of His wings; and by so doing we shall have no cause to fear any violent accidents of nature, nor can we be harmed by any persecutions or tumults which evil spirits or evil men may raise against us. Amidst them all we may say, with confidence, 'The floods are risen, O Lord, the floods have lift up their voice. The waves of the sea are mighty and rage horribly; but yet the Lord, who dwelleth on high, is mightier.'

I. WILLIAMS.

The Stilling of the Storm.

S. Matt. viii. 25, 26.

CHRIST embarked in a ship alone with His disciples, that He might more freely blame their unbelief—'Why are ye so fearful, O ye of little faith?' . . . It may be thought that Christ

slept, although that sleep was true and natural, not pretended, as some think, yet that it was voluntary so that the tempest while He was sleeping, being without His design.

(1.) He rebuked the winds and the sea.

The Vulgate has *imperavit*, 'He commanded,' as if the tempest had been caused by evil angels.

There was a great calm.

For all created things know their Creator; and the things which are not capable of communication with us are able to have communication with Him. A great power is His! since a great calm is brought about by a great power.

What I have said as to anger, hold fast as a rule in all your temptations. A temptation has sprung up; it is the wind; thou art disturbed; it is a wave. Awake up Christ, then; let Him speak with thee. 'Who is this, since the winds and the sea obey Him?' Who is this, whom the sea obeyeth? The sea is His, and He made it. 'All things were made by Him.' Imitate the winds, then, and the sea; and obey the Creator more than they. At Christ's command the sea giveth ear; and art thou deaf? The sea heareth, and the wind ceaseth: and dost thou still blow on? What! I say, I do, I devise; what is all this, but to be blowing on, and to be unwilling to stop in obedience to the word of Christ? Let not the wave excel you, in this troubled state of your heart. Yet since we are but men, if the wind should drive us on, and stir up the violent passions of our souls, let us not despair; let us awake Christ, that we may sail on a tranquil sea, and so come to our country.

The Fathers interpret this miracle also mystically. Thus S. Chrysostom: 'The troubling of the sea was a type of the future trials of the Church: for the ship among the billows is the Church, and also the soul among temptations, by which it is exercised and profited.' 'Life without temptation is as a dead sea,' says Seneca. So also a man without temptation is as one in stupor, and dead: temptation, therefore, rouses him, that he may gather his forces to overcome it.

II. As to the sleep of Christ.

It expresses the security of power, to rest alone and intrepid, while all were fearing around.

It is told of S. Frances of Sales, that in his youth, when he was known merely as Count of Sales, having arrived upon a visit to the city of Rome, he engaged apartments in a house on the banks of the Tiber, where he placed his luggage, and took up his abode. One evening, on returning to his lodging, he found that his rooms had been taken possession of by some newly-arrived strangers, to whom the landlord had let them again at a higher rent, in spite of his

previous agreement with S. Francis. The servants of the Saint were engaged in an angry dispute with the landlord, whom they reproached for his unmannerly conduct and breach of promise. S. Francis, however, told them at once to give up disputing, and to come with him to seek another lodging. With a very bad grace they obeyed him, but they were not long in perceiving that what had happened was the effect of a special Providence watching over the safety of the holy youth. That very night the house which they had just left was carried away by the waters of the Tiber, which, swelled by the heavy rains, unexpectedly overflowed their banks. Not a trace of the house remained on the following morning, and all within it perished.

Upon leaving Rome, S. Francis travelled to the seaport of Ancona, where he found a ship on the point of setting sail for Venice. Finding that the captain was willing to take him on board, he engaged his passage, and paid his fare. At the moment of departure, however, a lady of rank made her appearance, and perceiving S. Francis, who had already taken his place, in an angry tone desired the captain to order him out, as she had engaged the whole vessel for herself and her attendants. Upon this, S. Francis, coming forward, stated his case respectfully to the lady, and begged that he might be allowed to keep his place, as he should not be at all in her way, and was very anxious to pursue his journey. The lady, however, rudely persisted, and almost gave orders to have his luggage thrown overboard. S. Francis submitted to the affront with his usual meekness, and, when the ship set sail, remained on shore trying to pacify his angry attendants. While he was speaking the clouds gathered, a violent storm arose, and the ill-fated vessel sank, before their eyes, with every soul on board, at the very entrance of the harbour.

III. Civil obedience in things lawful is a religious duty (Romans xiii. 5).

For the ultimate source of all power is God Himself.

The Emperor Henry, who was a pious prince, wearied with cares of state, proposed to abdicate, and enter a monastery, which was ruled by a good man named Richard. His abdication at that time would have been the cause of many evils to the Empire, which needed all his strength and vigilance. Accordingly, when the Emperor made his application to be received into the monastery, 'Will you,' said Richard, 'practise obedience unto death, following the rule and example of Jesus Christ?' He replied that he would do this with all his heart. 'And I,' said Richard, 'receive you from this moment into the number of my brethren, and take you into my spiritual charge, provided that on your side you promise to follow, as in the sight of God, all that I shall order you.' Henry promised, and the

abbot proceeded, 'I desire, then, and order you to take up again the government of the Empire, which has been confided to your care by Divine Providence, and that you ensure, as far as in you lies, the safety and advantage of your subjects, by your vigilance and firmness in doing justice.' The Emperor did not hear without reluctance that unexpected command. He obeyed, nevertheless; but he always from that time regarded himself as the disciple of Abbot Richard.

S. J. EALES.

Christ Ministering to Disorder.

Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.
S. MATTHEW viii. 26.

THE paragraph before us has two parts. At first sight they are not distinct only—they are incongruous. When you study them, you see the harmony. Both represent Christ as the Restorer and Tranquilliser. Both reveal Him as intervening, interposing, in the disorders and derangements of this troublesome world. The scenery of the two manifestations is widely different. The one is a storm at sea; the other is a storm in the soul. But Christ manifests Himself in each of them: in each, when He manifests Himself, there is a great calm.

It is difficult to read either narrative without a typical even more thun a literal application.

I. How precious, in this aspect, that revelation, dear to our childhood, of the voyage, and the tempest, and the sleep, and the awakening! That interposition of Jesus Christ was not the end of nature's convulsions—of her turbulent tossings in wind and wave, her cruel ravages in earthquake and fire, her savage freaks, her merciless massacres. Far more characteristic, at first sight, the sleep of Christ than His waking! Where is He now, impatience might suggest, when, within sight of shore, in the midst of a crowd of vessels, with anchors safely cast and lights duly burning, three hundred human lives, made in His image, charge (like any others) of the Creator and Preserver, are given over, tied and bound, to the cruel mercies of some foreign blunderer who ought not to have been there? How was it that He, who came for the very purpose of bringing back God into His own world, was not awake and observant in that almost unexampled scene of horror? It is one—it is but one—of the mysteries, of the moral mysteries, of Christ's quiescence and of God's permission. 'The foundations of the world are' still 'out of course:' something there is, abroad in the earth—the gospel

calls it sin—which has thrown out the arrangements, which has disordered the harmonies, of the first creation: and even Christ Himself, while He revealed a heaven and a hand and a Father above, while He brought to light a life and an immortality beyond time, came not, at once, to redress these wrongs, or to curb these frenzies, or to rescue 'the very elect' out of these disasters. He came rather to show the littleness of suffering, and the insignificance of death itself, in comparison with the whole of being and with the infinity of eternity. He came to make danger endurable, resistible, conquerable, in His name and for His disciples. He came to inspire men with a courage and a heroism and a divine self-sacrifice worth whole centuries and millenniums of safe and sleepy and torpid existence. He came to make it possible for that brave Englishman to sever himself from the wife of his bosom—to launch her, under the care of strangers, upon the wide waters, and to stay behind, himself, to perish—that he might just do his duty—that he might be true to a trust, and a man amongst the weak and the cowardly and the selfish. Yes, Christ may seem to be asleep, while waves roar and ships founder and hearts break and homes are swept bare—but that sleep is quick-sighted and tender-hearted and strong to save: that sleep is but the semblance of unconcern or indifference: from it there goes out a 'virtue' alike of fortitude and of sympathy, more than compensating every struggle of the brave and every tear of the desolate.

Thus the miracle, which is valuable as an evidence, becomes doubly valuable as a parable. This is no allegorising, no spiritualising—in other words, no evasion of the plain, literal, historical record: we can draw no lesson, and no moral, and no comfort from a fable: before the heart can find rest in the doctrine, the mind must have found certainty in the fact. Christ, for proof's sake, for evidence sake, brought, on this occasion, order into confusion, and calm out of storm—proving Himself the Lord of Nature here in her disorders, as elsewhere in her diseases. Thus He showed Himself the Master of our life as we live it—a life of conflict and buffeting, as with stubborn elements, so with adverse circumstances, and so with warring passions. He who is Omnipotent over one of these actualities is Omnipotent over all: He of whom I say, 'What manner of man is this, that even winds and sea obey Him?' is evidently One to whom I can carry disorders not external—storms and schisms and battles, of which the weapons and the controversies and the stratagems are within.

II. Christ came not to make the outward world calm, whether the world of elements or the world of circumstances. But He came, first, to show Himself, by many infallible proofs, supreme even over these: and He came, secondly, to introduce an inward peace, at once,

into all these confusions; to enable men to possess their souls in patience, to be self-controlled, and to be firm, and to be commanding, and to be humane, and to be generous, and to be chivalrous, amidst the most sudden and terrible dangers, and (if necessary) even to die at their post, though that post, as in this late instance, was deputed, was accidental, was by right another's: in all this, He Himself went before, and bade men follow: even thus, though in a sense unapproachable and all His own, He stood alone on the helm of a sinking vessel—He bore alone all the responsibilities and all the anxieties and all the agonies of a race, of a world, the sport of raging seas of woe and sin—alone He toiled, alone He suffered, alone He died, leaving a pattern and an example for all time, and for every kind and form of trial.

And when, in such seasons of extreme peril, we come to Him, as He seems perhaps to be sleeping, with the cry of faith, 'Lord, save us, we perish;' this is how He saves—not by taking us out of difficulty, but by making us in our weakness strangely strong; not by smoothing the circumstances, but by fortifying the soul—infusing grace at the moment, and pointing to an indestructible peace beyond.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

The Nature of Christ.

What manner of man is this? S. MATTHEW viii. 27.

I. WHAT manner of man is this? We cannot doubt, surely, that in the fulness of human organisation Jesus of Nazareth possessed every faculty of action in its highest form and every capacity of endurance in its most intense susceptibility. Nay, we hardly doubt that, except in the very most superficial accidents, our ideal mental picture of Him is truer than the most naturalistic creation of the painter and the traveller. We do not guess at the contour of His face, but we do enter into the mind of the Christ; somewhat, at a great distance, but still according to His Spirit. We think we know Him as a twelve years old boy; who to the eyes of the people of Nazareth may be like any other child, who has contracted His divine appreciation of things around Him, and of His own great purpose, within the mental capacity of a schoolboy; and we follow Him increasing in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man; year by year, lesson by lesson, learning the task of life, learning as a man and feeling as a man because He is a man, and because His Eternal power and Godhead which are ever in Him, consciously and effectually working in heaven

and in earth, do not interfere to spare Him one human effort, or one human pang of failure, or one human start of revulsion, or one human longing for human love and praise. We do not care to think of Him as a divine child, hurt and mortified because those about Him begrudged Him the love that His gentleness and obedience merited; we do not know that they did so; nay, we think all who cared to know Him must have loved Him; but He was unappreciated, uncomprehended; conscious even humanly of His intelligence and nobility, yet treated as any other. As a little child! as such a child as He Himself had been, in such an idea of childhood, of such is the kingdom of heaven.

We do not care to think of Him as the unappreciated young man; He who had laid down divine glory, and was laying aside all thought of self in His identification of Himself with every man, for whom He was going to endure death; we cannot lower our idea of Him by thinking of Him as capable of mortification or humiliation, because they who saw Him saw no beauty that they should desire Him. Yet we are willing to think of Him as longing for human love, as not unimpressible by human praise, because in the very fulness of His nature He must have entered into the feelings which are the strongest of all feelings in the race of which He has made Himself one.

The mystery of His death humanly read is but the summing up of the mystery of His life. So strangely solitary, yet not marked out by loneliness: not even, like the Baptist's, a life in the desert until the time of His showing unto Israel: a life of high-strung human faculty and human capacity uncomprehended, unnoticed, yet not dwelling apart, not lonely as a star, not priding itself on the love of love or the hate of hate or the scorn of scorn, but subject unto His mother, called the carpenter's son, undistinguished among the brethren and sisters of the house; 'how hath this man letters, having never learned?'

II. We can perhaps too easily satisfy ourselves about this mystery, and solve it by the belief of the divine consciousness pervading the whole personality of the God-man: by thinking, surely the knowledge of His great work and mission must have comforted Him; He was God, to Him the thirty years of His human life were surely but as the twinkling of an eye. He could see before Him, in the long vista of ages immeasurable, the countless hosts that He was preparing to save by the Cross and Passion to which He was hastening; He knew that He was God, and that all creation could not crush Him, or make void one of His Almighty purposes. Most true, assuredly; but yet He is very man. We have no warrant in Holy Scripture for believing that divine consciousness could sweeten one drop of the bitter cup that He drank: if divine consciousness

could lighten by one atom the burden that was laid upon Him, what truth is there in the words, 'The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all'? The bitter, exceeding bitter cry on the Cross, 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' surely proves that, even to the last weakness of mortal languor and exhaustion, He bore all that man has to bear. Multiplied it may well be by the mystery of His divinity, but not robbed of any single characteristic of its painfulness. Think of Him from childhood knowing His mission, and all His life with human gaze set upon Calvary with heroic resolution, steadfast face set towards the Jerusalem where He was to accomplish the work He had undertaken. We do not wonder that in the ancient Church the wonderful discrepancy bewildered men, who saw more clearly than we see the state of things and the sort of men He lived among. We do not wonder that they lost themselves in speculation about the unity of the substance of the Godhead, confused the Persons, tried to rationalise about the natures and the wills of the Son, and drew strange conclusions as to the relations of the Manhood and the Godhead. It is not that we have less interest or are less amazed at the mystery of the manhood that we are content to rest in simple faith on the definitions of our creeds as to the mystery of the Godhead. We wonder and adore. But when we look on Him as one of ourselves, and so He made Himself, when we try, let us say it humbly, and with hearts cast down before Him, when we try to imagine ourselves in His place at Nazareth, during the years of the preparation—well, I do not say that we wonder and adore more than when we contemplate the doctrine of His divinity, but I think we feel more intimately and consciously how, notwithstanding His making Himself one of us, He stands forth alone and without approach to a parallel among all that are born of women. What manner of man is this? The Father does not solve the mystery to us on which our faith rests. Lord, we believe, help Thou our unbelief. We do not ask now for perfect knowledge, but for strengthened faith; the perfect knowledge will come by and by.

BISHOP MACKERNESS.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

A Saviour, and not a Tormentor.

And when He was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God? art Thou come hither to torment us before the time? S. MATTHEW viii. 28, 29.

I. JESUS had been sailing with His disciples on the Sea of Gennesaret. Suddenly there came on a great storm, and the disciples awoke their sleeping Master, who rebuked the waves and made them calm. But our Lord had no sooner landed on the other side in the country of the Gadarenes than there was another work of calming for Him to do—not now the troubled waves of the sea, but the no less troubled spirits of two devil-possessed men.

Very dreadful was their condition as they went to meet Jesus. They were literally unkind, or unkinned—for they hated their kind, and preferred, in their unsocial state of mind, to live alone in the limestone caves that were used for burial-places. So savage were they that the road near where they dwelt was considered unsafe. They had that hatred of clothes which lunatics often have. With almost superhuman strength they broke off the chains with which men attempted to bind them, and to relieve the agony of their minds they were wont to cut themselves with sharp stones.

It would seem that there were two natures in the men—one, a good and a sane nature, urging them to go to meet Jesus; the other, a bad and a mad nature, making them cry, 'What have we to do with Thee, Thou Son of God?' Is it not so with all of us? Two voices there are within—one calling us to what is healthy and holy, the other to all that is destructive and bad.

We have been startled into seriousness by the death of a friend. A letter just received from some loved one makes us desire to be different. A word spoken, gratitude for blessings received—these things make us all wish at times to be better. The good voice within says: 'Go and meet Jesus; see how the loving Saviour is coming to release you from where you have entombed yourself in sin and selfishness.' But the other voice soon clamours to be heard. 'You will,' it says, 'have to put away your pleasant vices if you go to Jesus, and to get rid of these will be a tormenting process. Don't be a fool; have nothing to do with Jesus.'

II. We may be sure of this, that just as the Saviour did not land on the coast of the Gadarenes to torment them, but to save them from the demons and sins that were their real tormentors: so

He did not come into the world to torment us, but to save us from evil passions and desires, than which there are no worse tormentors. This, however, is what some people do not believe. They think that the religion of Jesus Christ is a tormenting religion, and that it torments in two ways—first, by putting restraint upon our conduct, and, secondly, by taking up all our time.

Now, it may be frankly admitted that true religion does restrain our conduct; but this ought not to be considered a tormenting characteristic, because every man, if he is to remain a man and not to become a brute, must restrain himself. If we did not restrain ourselves we would be mastered by our own passions, and these would indeed be tormentors. In comparison with slavery to self the service of Christ is perfect freedom. A Christian may take part in every pleasure and in every business in which a true man may take part.

'All are yours,' says S. Paul, as much as to say that it is possible to use everything in this world without abusing it. Christ cannot truthfully be said to have come to torment us by putting restraints upon us, for the Christian may say: 'I dare do all that may become a man; who dares do more is none.'

Nor does Christ torment us by taking up all our time. The truth is, it requires no time to be religious. It is no excuse, and shows quite a mistaken notion of what religion is to say: 'Oh, I am a busy man and have no time to be religious!' What time does it take to do everything to the glory of God, which is true religion? No more time than to do everything to God's dishonour.

E. J. HARDY.

An Unwelcome Presence.

And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him they besought Him that He would depart out of their coasts. S. MATTHEW viii. 31.

WE speak of a crowd sometimes as 'the many-headed.' Well, to see such a crowd swept on by one all-compelling power, bent upon a definite object, is always an impressive sight. There are times when it is also something more. When, for instance, all the worst passions of the mob are raised, as in the horrible scenes of the French Revolution, it becomes a terrible sight. When passions are hushed and differences buried, in the face of a common calamity, or in the presence of the illustrious dead, or for the purpose of doing honour to the living, then it is a thrilling, or a pathetic, or a moving sight.

Now, as we watch the many-headed crowd pouring out from the little town of Gergesa on this, the only occasion that that place is

mentioned in the holy Gospels, what is at first an impressive, becomes, before it ends, a painful sight. What does this demonstration mean? Well, it means that the Gergesenes have on this occasion not a common bond of union only, but that they are united on a question of material interests; and these are, or are imagined to be, in immediate peril. And we are not surprised at the energy and the earnestness they display when we consider that it is a money question out of which all this excitement has arisen; for it is always an easy matter to win people's attention, and to awaken their interest on matters that touch their pockets.

Half fearful, but wholly angry, these people go forth. They come to meet Jesus. They see the once dangerous maniac, 'clothed, and in his right mind,' sitting, tractable as a child, at his Deliverer's feet. This is a sight that may well awaken feelings of gratitude towards and confidence in the Saviour; but it does not touch them. Why should they pay for this man's cure? He is healed, but they are so much the poorer! 'Monstrous!' say they, and with indecent haste they beg the Saviour to leave their coasts, a prayer that He immediately complies with.

I. A painful, pitiful scene! Yet these Gergesenes only did openly and publicly what we do (many of us) secretly and in our hearts. There are times when the Saviour's presence is unwelcome to us, because it is at such times an irritating, disturbing presence, and then we would like, if we could, to be rid of it.

Times, for instance, when we are bidden to view our lives by the light of His life; when we are bidden to ask what He would say if He were with us in the flesh, inspecting our outward and our inward lives. And when we know that He would tell us plainly that our ways are not what they ought to be; or that we are not what men take us to be; that the money we are making is not come by honestly, whatever the world may choose to say about such dealings; that the luxury which we tell ourselves is a necessity to us, is nothing of the kind; that our selfishness, and sloth, and fear of self-denial, are not consistent with our Christian profession; that our acquiescence in the state of social morality (or rather want of social morality), is cowardly and wrong; then we begin to say, 'This is an uncomfortable way of looking at things; I don't care for this. Let us change the subject. This standard is not suited to the times we live in.' In other words, we desire to be rid of the Saviour's searching presence.

II. The idea people have formed of the Christian religion is, that it is something to make them comfortable—something that teaches us about the nature of the Godhead, the mystery of the Incarnation, and such things; that tells us a good deal about the next

world, and what we may expect to see and do in that world. With all this we have no quarrel. But now it so happens that the religion of Jesus Christ has, first of all, a good deal to say to us in this life and about this life; it tells us very plainly that certain things ought to be done, and certain other things left undone, and with this we are not always equally content.

And so, if Jesus Christ were to come to us to-day, as He did to the Gergesenes so long ago, there is no doubt that to receive Him we should have to be prepared to lose something, perhaps a good deal. And it is equally certain that in many a place He would hear, 'Depart from us, we pray Thee,' or He would read the prayer in hearts that would not dare to utter it.

Let us only ask ourselves how we should act, supposing the Saviour were to come to our own homes to-day, desiring to make His abode with us, but saying, 'First of all you must clear out of this house these unrighteous gains, these sinful pleasures, these unworthy feelings, these unholy desires that I see here.' What should we do? Should we be prepared to say, 'Lord! it is done as Thou desirest. Let all go—only do Thou tarry!' Or should we wish that the Saviour would not press His request, but leave us, at least for a time. Would it be, 'Come' or 'Depart'?

J. B. C. MURPHY.

IV OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

The Province of Feeling in Religious Experience.

Oh that I were as in months past; as in the days when God preserved me.
JOB xxix. 2, 3.

JOB was, indeed, terribly afflicted. He had lost all his property, and been bereaved of all his children; his wife had tempted him to curse God, and his friends, who had come to sympathise with him, had remained to pronounce condemnation on him. Naturally enough, therefore, he had for the time being come to think that God had forsaken him. But, natural though it was, this opinion was not true. So we judge of this outcry of misery from his heart. For God was as really with him then as ever He had been, and he himself was as good a man as ever he had been. Nay, more, he had as much of God's grace as ever he had been favoured with, only that had gone meanwhile into another direction than the emotional. He was judg-

ing of God's attitude toward him by his emotions, and as these had fallen below zero, he concluded that God had forsaken him. But he was not the last, by any means, who had fallen into that mistake; and therefore this explanation of his case may fitly form the starting-point for an attempt to define and illustrate the proper province of feeling in religious experience.

I. First of all, then, note that feeling follows intelligent conviction and belief of the truth of something that immediately concerns us as individuals. It is not first the feeling and then the faith; but it is first intelligence, then faith, then direct and immediate personal interest in that which is believed, and then feeling. But if this be a correct analysis, you will see at a glance how far wrong those are who make the absence of feeling in them an excuse for not coming to Christ, as well as those who are constantly sighing and crying for more feeling of love to Christ as an evidence of the genuineness of their religion. Their error does not simply consist in putting too high a value upon feeling, but also in putting it into the wrong place. Even if the sinner had feeling, that would not commend him to Christ; for if it did, it would be something in himself which divided with Christ the glory of his salvation, and we know that no countenance is given in Scripture to anything of that kind. Again, if the feeling of love to Christ is to be regarded as the only ground of assurance, that also is giving to feeling a value which does not of right belong to it, since, so far as the ground of assurance is within the heart, it consists of the character as a whole viewed as the fruit of the Spirit, while the emotion of love to Jesus is only one feature of that character.

Christian emotion is not to be sought directly as an end; but it will come through our understanding of, and belief in, those statements that are adapted and designed to produce it, each in its own order; first the intelligence, then the faith, then the feeling.

II. There can be no religion, in the Christian sense of that word, without feeling. That must be evident from the truth already established that feeling follows faith. For if there be no feeling there has been no faith, and where there is no faith there is no religion, for 'without faith it is impossible to please God.' The emotional is just as truly a part of our nature as the intellectual or the moral, and as regeneration affects the whole nature, it must transfigure the emotional portion of it as really as the others. The new birth does not uproot or lop off any part of our humanity; it only takes the sin out of it all. It does not eradicate our feelings, but it christianises them. We still fear and love and hope and rejoice; but the things which we fear, the objects which we love, the good which we hope for, and the matters over which we rejoice, are dif-

ferent,—are, indeed, entirely the opposite of those which we feared, loved, hoped for, and rejoiced over before. All that we admit; but, after all, that is only a part of the great transformation which the Scriptures call regeneration.

III. Feeling is not the whole of religion. That which the Holy Ghost produces in us through faith in Jesus Christ, is a whole new nature, and that nature includes the intellectual, the moral, and the volitional, as well as the emotional. Or if you will have it in another form, religion is character, and emotion is only one element of character. The important question, therefore, is *not* what or how does a man feel, but what *is* he? As the man is, so are his feelings. If he be a new man, then just as his mind will be occupied with new thoughts, and his conscience will own a new Lord, and his will will obey a new master, and his conduct will serve his generation by the will of God, so his feelings will follow in their appropriate exercise. Religion is right thinking and right acting, as well as right feeling toward God and our fellow-men for Christ's sake. The feeling stands midway between the thinking and the acting, passing the one on, as it were, to the other; but it cannot be made a substitute for either, and only in the combination of the three have we the genuine holy character which is the outcome of regeneration.

IV. The feeling which does not lead to action, but terminates simply and only on itself, is always dangerous. The feeling which does not spring from intelligent faith is fanaticism; on the other hand, that which does not lead to action is sentimentalism, and it is difficult to say which of the two is more pernicious. But for the present I have only to do with the latter, and I allege that feeling which does not lead to action has a hardening influence on the heart. As Bishop Butler has put it in a very suggestive passage in his *Analogy*, 'From our very faculty of habits, passive impressions, by being repeated, grow weaker.'

If emotion comes to be regarded as the whole of religion, and if it does not stimulate to holy activity, then by and by the emotion itself will disappear, and the heart will be hardened into utter impenetrability. The hearer who is intensely moved by one discourse, but goes away straightway forgetting all his impressions, and is not brought to immediate and decided Christian activity, will be less moved by the next, and less by the next, until at length he becomes 'past feeling,' and gives himself over to work all manner of iniquity with greediness. The emotion must be made a motive principle, else the result will be most pernicious. If one is moved to love, let him seek some means of manifesting that love; if to compassion, let him give his compassion an outward form in beneficence; if to fear, let him exert himself to guard against the danger of which he is afraid; if to

penitence, let him forsake the sin for which he feels regret; if to admiration, let him stir himself up to imitate, so far as he may, that which he admires. The tears which are 'idle' will ultimately exhaust the fountain out of which they flow, and the feelings that are not fruitful in good works will by and by paralyse the heart, and render it entirely unimpressible; for all such abuse must end in impotence.

V. The feeling which leads to action is just for that reason less a matter of consciousness as feeling. It becomes transmuted into conduct; and just as steam makes less noise when it is driving machinery than when it is being blown off, so the oftener feeling is transmuted into action the less does one come to be aware of the feeling that is in the action. A man may be advancing in moral excellence by that very course which deadens his consciousness to his emotions. When holiness, therefore, becomes a habit, we are less sensible of feeling, not because the feeling is not there, but because its operation has become automatic through the habit which we have acquired of turning it into action. W. M. TAYLOR.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

The Sympathy of God.

Master, carest Thou not that we perish? S. Mark vi. 38.

In a dangerous storm on the capricious inland sea of Gennesaret, a little boat, occupied by thirteen persons, is crossing from the western to the eastern shore—the waves are breaking into the ship, so that it is now full of water—and one, evidently the leader of the little company, is in the hinder part of the vessel, not helping, not cheering, not sympathising with the rest—no, asleep. It is He who suggested the crossing; He who, when the evening of a long, toilsome day was come, had said: 'Let us pass over unto the other side.' In some sense, then, He was to blame for the peril; why had He not foreseen the winds and the waves, and postponed the voyage, at least to the morning? They had trusted Him—not wisely, but too

well—and now, instead of feeling for them in their distress, He lies there taking His rest: lies there asleep. The sting of the danger is in that sleep. If He were awake, and alive to their trouble, they could have borne it; they were always ready to follow Him—sometimes they thought they could die with Him; but that He should be indifferent to their alarm, that He should be able to sleep through it, this was unkind, this was unlike Him; half in astonishment, half in reproach, they at last awaken Him with the question, 'Master, carest Thou not that we perish?'

Miracle and parable are but differences of name in many places of the gospel—and it is so here. The crossing, that storm, that sleep, that awakening, all were typical; real as facts, significant as emblems. They have all been acted again and again in human lives, in spiritual histories; redemption itself is just that—a world's misery, a world's sense of neglect, a divine sleep, a divine awakening—'the times of that ignorance God winked at,' at last He interposed for deliverance, rebuked the wind and the sea, and would have all men everywhere to be saved.

I. 'Master, carest Thou not that we perish?' is one of those graphic and pathetic touches which we owe to this second gospel. The other Evangelists are contented to say, 'Master, Master, we perish,' or, 'Lord, save us, we perish.' S. Mark, preserving (it may be) a reminiscence of S. Peter—himself present at the event—gives that which we seem to recognise at once as the exact expression; represents, at all events, the exact point of the feeling, in this 'Carest Thou not?' Is it nothing to Thee whether we live or die? Hast Thou no thought for us who have left all for Thee?

There can be no doubt that, even amongst human beings, it is an immense aggravation of any calamity to feel that it is not cared for. To suffer unregarded, neglected, unloved, with cold careless eyes looking on, or closed in idle sleep, which one touch of sympathy would have prevented, is a thing differing in kind as well as degree from any suffering which has love, or even pity, as its companion. The expostulation of Gethsemane, 'Couldest not thou watch with Me one hour?' was the utterance (in part at least) of a human distress. Made in all things like unto His brethren, the Man of Sorrows was expressing in that pathetic interrogation the very thought breathed once, with apparent reason to Him, 'Carest Thou not that we perish?' Even He—proving in all things His Deity by His Humanity—was human also in this—that He accepted, that He even yearned for sympathy, and could say, in the agony of the sin-bearing, to one from whom He might have looked for compassion, Carest Thou not for this 'horror of great darkness,' for this fear of death which is fallen upon Me?

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

All have known at some time the double sadness of a bereavement which, for any reason or for none, has lacked sympathy. Sometimes there has been a character veiled from all but its very nearest and dearest—surrounding friends, even friends near as a brother, have not been admitted to the privacy, or have not been congenial to the disposition of the person whose departure has created, just for one heart, a perpetual desolation—how has it jarred upon that one ear to hear the vague condolences, to receive the inadequate, the half unreal lamentations of those who, compassionate indeed, but cannot (as we say) enter into the individuality of the orphanage or the widowhood which must go with him to the grave.

Thus is it in all experiences—we see it even in the vilest. The hisses and execrations, even the curses not loud but deep, of a condemning mob, have had power to add bitterness to the last horrors of a public execution; these have been the clenching evidences that no man compassionates, that over those fathomless, those gloomy waters, there flies no vessel of commiseration; these have brought home to the dying criminal the awful conviction—more awful than death—that no man cares that he perishes. On the other hand there is no fear, and no anguish, and no form of death which may not be soothed and mitigated by the presence of a generous, heart-deep, self-less sympathy. It is no stretch of imagination to hope that some softening influence may communicate itself to the hearts of shipwrecked mariners, in the sight of pier and beach, swarming with agonised beholders, powerless, indeed, to help, but strong to feel, and assuring them by look or sign that there are those who care if they perish.

It is this known instinct of nature which makes the last offices of nurse and physician, of pastor and friend, so powerfully ministerial to the bed of inevitable, inexorable death; it is this which has added the last touch of misery to deaths died in abandonment or exile, where there has been none to catch the last sigh, to breathe the name of home, or to point the eye and the heart upward to that opening heaven where the Son of Man standeth at the right hand of God.

II. But in the instance before us there was a more than human sympathy missed and craved for. And thus it carries our thoughts into a region above that of earthly brotherhood, and suggests some reflections upon the complaints and expostulations of humanity itself in the ear of 'a God that hideth himself,' and a Saviour seeming to slumber.

It cannot be denied that there are many facts and many experiences in the life of this world, which irresistibly suggest the question whether God can be waking, or, if wakeful, caring. To try to enumerate such phenomena is as needless as it is painful. We cannot

but read this sleep of Jesus Christ in the boat tossed by the wave, with His disciples standing by, wondering and half murmuring, as intending to represent the world-wide, age-long mystery to which we are pointing. It does seem wonderful, not only or chiefly, that there should be pain, disease, and death in the earth—earth being what it is in the matter of sin, for we cannot but feel that it would be more wonderful still, a real offence to faith, a real stumbling-block to virtue, if a sinful were not also a suffering creation—but how, in the confession of the Book of God itself, all the foundations of the earth are thrown out of course by the existence of sin upon it, and by the perversenesses, mismanagements, and self-contradictions, which are the growth and fruit of that primary fact of evil. 'Carest Thou not,' we are tempted to say to the Divine Ruler Himself, 'that, whether it be by a moral murder or a moral suicide, we, Thy creatures, are all perishing!'

These questions are as old as the Fall, and we have learned in some measure the lesson of patience concerning them. But when the experience comes into a man's own life, he finds himself still asking, 'Carest Thou not that I perish?' Painful it might be to suffer—pain and suffering are but names for each other—painful it must be to live uneasy days, in body or spirit, through poverty and its circumstances, through disease and loneliness, through fears and fightings on spiritual subjects, through cavils of doubters, and taunts of scoffers, and all the thousand tortures of a busy and inventive infidelity—painful this must be, whatever be its shape and form—yet even this is not the worst thing. If I could see in all this a kindly purpose—an end and an aim, like that spoken of by the Patriarch—'When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold'—I could bear anything. I know that I want chastening, to beat down my self-will. I know that I want sharp discipline, of scourge and cross, to cure me of my vanity and my levity. I know that I want a darkening, one by one, of the false lights of earth, to make the light of heaven precious or even visible. But surely it is not necessary, it is not beneficial, that I should be so utterly left without one sign of a gracious motive, or even of a personal dealing, that I could quite easily imagine myself the mere creature of chance, the mere sport and plaything of destiny, in all that happens to me, mental as much as physical, and can only keep alive in myself an opposite idea, by a sort of dogged adherence to principles which it would be death, and worse than death, to abandon? I feel that I could bear almost anything if I knew that God held me in His hand, that I could bear quite anything if I were sure that He was only, and of set purpose, refining and purifying me. The dreadful, the intolerable, thing is that I cannot see this, cannot know this except in theory and by rote, and

am therefore constantly driven, by stress of searching winds and lashing waves, to look towards the unseen Presence, and say, 'Carest Thou not that I perish?'

III. When a man has made up his mind at all costs to believe in the divine care for him—and when we say, 'at all costs,' we mean, 'at the cost of supposing some temporary limit to the present exercise of the divine power itself—he will find, as he casts himself, day by day, upon that love and that compassion, that, for him at all events—however it may be for the universe—the power is already sufficient too. He may still be unable to add one jot or one tittle to the old argument about the existence of evil—he may count it more reverent, as well as more true, to say, 'Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, I cannot attain to it'—but he will find that the difficulty is no longer, for him personally, a moral difficulty—he will find that prayer does bring him the needed comfort and the needed help—as his day, so his strength is—beginning with the axiom, 'Thou, God, carest,' he passes on into the experimental conviction, 'There is none like unto Thee, O Lord, there is not one that can do as Thou doest!'

This is the present privilege of all who, for good or ill, cast in their lot decisively with Jesus Christ. Though for these, as for others, the theory of life is still dark and baffling, the practice is like the light shining more and more till the perfect day shall come. On the hypothesis (as men speak) of the gospel, the reading of the great riddle is but a question of time. For each particular life committed to it, the mystery is unveiled already. 'Yet a little while and He that cometh shall come,' makes patience, patience and hope, patience, hope, and courage, these three, the sum and substance, the sufficient stay also, of the life that is. For others it is not so. On the life that has undertaken itself, its own charge, its own guidance, its own solution, the shadow lies heavily, and must lie—and the sun goes down in gloom. Whatever may be the eventual consolation of the race, it has placed itself outside it. It has no evidences to add to the stock of hope—it has no consolations to carry to the account of patience. To it the only inquiry must be that of the text—as it watches the deepening anxieties of men and nations; as it hears the tottering faiths and despairing deathbeds; as it watches for the morning that comes not, and elaborate constitutions, divine and human, which refuse to march—it can but look upward into the inscrutable, impersonal heaven, and ask, 'Thou,' if there be One in hearing—if all be not vague chance, shifting change, or inflexible law; if there be any One above, intelligent, however silent—'carest Thou not that we perish?'

One thing we cannot say—that our Master cares not. If He had

not cared to save, would He have left the glories of heaven to be born of a woman, to be made one of us, to share our weakness, temptations, and sorrows, to be despised and rejected by His own, to stoop at last to death, even the death of the cross? Certainly He cares if we perish. Say, if you must say it, with the scoffer, that He attempted the impossible—that He miscalculated the comparative forces of antagonistic good and evil—that He failed in His great adventure—that He lived and died in vain. Say, if you must say it, with the scoffer, that He was conscious of failure, that He felt Himself defeated, that He died broken-hearted. At least you cannot accuse Him of not caring. He took it upon Him to deliver man—He came upon earth, He endured the contradiction of sinners, He submitted to the last agonies, that He might help, that He might redeem, that He might regenerate, those who cared not for one another, those who cared not for themselves.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

The Stilling of the Storm.

Carest Thou not that we perish? S. Mark vi. 38.

I. THIS was a mighty work indeed, the putting forth of a tremendous power such as belongs exclusively to God. Those who do not believe in the possibility of any miracle, those who hold that the universe is governed by laws which even the Maker of it can nowise move or control, naturally try to explain away and to reduce this miracle to the level of a very ordinary matter. They say, truly enough, that such storms are often only sudden gusts, as short-lived as they are terrible while they last. And then they explain that when Jesus was so rudely awakened He saw at a glance that this tempest had already exhausted itself. Had He been allowed to sleep on, the calm would have duly arrived without any word from Him; but He had to keep alive the faith of His disciples by pretending to a superhuman power; and so His 'Peace, be still,' did not really quiet the sea, but it calmed their fears and restored their confidence in Himself which had been for a moment shaken. If you start with a predetermination like that not to believe in any supernatural power under any circumstances, then, of course, you may, with a little ingenuity, explain away almost anything; only you will do so at a terrible cost, for you will have to sacrifice the moral integrity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Either He did this great wonder, and so vindicated His claim to be the Son of God with

power, or else He pretended to do it and so deceived His disciples, and deceived us, too, and all the generations of men since those days. One or other of these views we must needs accept; there is none other possible: and I, for my part, can have no hesitation which of them to choose. The scientific doctrine of invariable law is a very valuable one, and has yielded great and precious results. No doubt, also, in ordinary circumstances it is most true, and to be steadfastly relied upon; but the perfect sincerity of Jesus, His utter superiority to all kinds of pretence, the simplicity and integrity of His soul—that is a weightier matter still. It is the ground of all our peace, the foundation of all our hope, the fountain of that living water in us which flows unto everlasting life; and it were an ill bargain to purchase a hard intellectual idea at the cost of a transcendent truth so rich with blessing to all the sons of men. But we believe, and are sure, that never was there such absolute truth in the world as in the pure soul of Jesus; that He never pretended anything, that He never deceived any one.

II. Great and marvellous, then, as this work was, and although it would have been the emptiest mockery for any one else to bid the winds be still and the sea be calm, yet was it no unfitting thing for Him who was in the beginning with God, and who was God, and without whom was not any thing made that was made. The Father had sent His Son into the world and given Him works to do that should bear witness to His divine majesty. Of these mighty works the great majority were works of healing, to prove that His mission was specially for restoring this troubled and distracted world—truly an errand of healing unto the children of men! But it was meet also that His power should be manifested in other directions, to make it plain that this was indeed Immanuel, God with us, the very presence of Him who stilleth the noise of the waters, and saith to the proud waves, 'Hitherto shall ye come and no further.'

III. The essence of our faith as Christians is the divinity of our Lord. That is no secondary doctrine which some may believe and others may call in question, and both be equally Christian men nevertheless. It is no deduction of theological ingenuity. It is the very root of the matter that God sent His Son into the world, born of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that are under the law, that we might obtain the adoption of sons. And being so transcendent a fact, it was needful to indicate it to us by signs and proofs which were beyond all dispute, not only by healing mercies, but supreme miracles; not only by the holy beauties of a perfect character, but also by a majestic power which could hush at a word the fierce winds and the raging waves.

We cannot afford to look down at these disciples as if we were

better than they. Do we ever ask ourselves whether Christ is with us in our troubles? and, if so, whether we should not possess our souls in peace seeing that He is here? Are we not prone, on the contrary, just to think of the danger that threatens us, or the difficulties that perplex us, or the evils of any kind that we apprehend? And when they are not at once removed we begin to feel as if we had been neglected or forgotten. 'Master, carest Thou not that we perish?' Were it not better to be thinking, 'I have still Christ with me; He is not hiding His face from me. I am conscious of His living presence still, and that He is fulfilling His promise, "Lo, I am with you always."' W. C. SMITH.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS.

The Honour due to All Men.
Rom. xiii. 1.

The spirit of bigotry, which confines its charity to a sect, and the spirit of aristocracy, which looks on the multitude as an inferior race, are alike rebuked by Christianity, which, eighteen hundred years ago, in a narrow and superstitious age, taught, what the present age is beginning to understand, that all men are essentially equal, and that all are to be honoured, because made for immortality, and endued with capabilities of ceaseless improvement.

Manners to Superiors.
Rom. xiii. 1.

Dean Swift affected familiarity and equality with the great. Dr. Johnson makes the following critique on this. He says:

'A great mind disdains to hold anything by courtesy, and therefore never usurps what a lawful claimant may take away. He that encroaches on another's dignity, puts himself in his power: he is either repelled with helpless indignity, or endured by clemency and condescension' (Proverbs xxv. 6, 7).

A Doubter Comforted.
S. Matt. viii. 26.

Dr. Owen, when a young man, having been for a considerable time in distress of mind, went one Lord's day, with a cousin of his, to hear Mr. Calamy, a celebrated preacher in London. From some occurrence, Mr. Calamy was prevented from preaching that day. Being uncertain whether there would be any sermon at all, Dr. Owen was solicited by his relation to go and hear another eminent minister, Mr. Jackson. Being indisposed to go farther, however, he kept his seat, resolving, if no minister came, to return to his lodgings. After waiting some time, a country minister came up to the pulpit, a stranger, not only to

Dr. Owen, but to the congregation, who, having prayed earnestly, took for his text these words, 'Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?' The very reading of the words surprised Dr. Owen; on which he secretly put up a prayer that God would be pleased by the minister to speak to his case. And his prayer was heard; for in that sermon the minister was directed to answer those very objections which he had commonly formed against himself; and though he had formerly given the same answers to himself without effect, yet now the time was come when God designed to speak peace to his soul; and the sermon (though otherwise a plain, familiar discourse) was blessed for the removing of all his doubts, and laid the foundation of that solid peace and comfort which he afterwards enjoyed.

The Demoniac. JESUS as the Prince of Peace.

S. LUKE viii. 26-40. (26) After the storm on the lake, a worse storm of demoniac rage.

(27) There met him a demoniac:

Note (i.) 'Long time';
(ii.) 'No clothes';
(iii.) No house ('tombs');
} (S. Luke).
(iv.) Impassable for travellers (S. Matthew).

(28) Not wholly impenitent—cried, fell down, cut himself. The true devilish spirit thinks it an injury not to be allowed to torment others.

(29) Explains 28.

(30) The name, 'Legion.'

(i.) Why Jesus asks;

(ii.) The man's misery.

Truth and error mingled.

(31) The demons' regret. The prayer of the wicked granted, to their own ruin.

(34-37) The comparative value of a man and the swine.

The trial, which?

Note the dread of Christ:

They all came to meet Him (S. Mark), and they ask Him to go away.

(i.) The coming—all came;

(ii.) The seeing—they saw Jesus and the man;

(iii.) The request (unanimous)—Go away; notwithstanding His having healed the sick, fed the hungry, quelled the storm, and healed this man = 'We desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.' They felt that He would not spare their sins (swine).

(iv.) He went away (37). Jesus will not force salvation on us.

(v.) Then were near salvation: 'I would,' and 'ye would not.'

They wronged Jesus ('fear'), and they wronged themselves; for when Jesus sails away, with Him go heaven, salvation, life, joy.

Wonder and Jesus.
S. Matt. viii. 27.

That which occasioned wonder to the Jews, and to our Lord's followers, was the exhibition of His power over nature (miracles). As though the only thing which could affect the mass of men with astonishment were that which is visible and startling to the senses. But with our Lord it is the very reverse. He never speaks as if there were anything strange or unnatural in the miracles He performs. He refers to them, indeed, as 'mighty works,' or rather as exertions of His power and of His goodness. But to Himself they appear perfectly natural and simple. There is a conspicuous absence of all effort about them. . . . Any display of effort is a revelation of weakness; but our Lord 'speaks and it is done, He commands and it stands fast.' It was by the phenomena of the moral world that His astonishment was occasioned — by its vast capacities on the one hand, and its terrible incapacities on the other. On the one hand, He marvelled at the faith manifested in the appeal of the centurion, who bade Him speak the word only and his servant should be healed; and He expressed a similar admiration at a like display of faith in the Canaanitish woman (S. Matt. viii. 10; xv. 28). On the other hand, when, in His own country, among His own kin, and in His own house, He found I imself without honour, so that He could not do any mighty work, save that He laid His hands upon a few sick folk and healed them, we are told that 'He marvelled because of their unbelief' (S. Mark vi. 6). The faith of which men are capable on the one hand, and the unbelief of which they are capable on the other—these are the only two things which are said to have evoked the wonder of the Lord Jesus. These, to His eye, were the only two real marvels exhibited during His ministry.

True Wisdom.
Job xxviii. 28.

We are told how Edmund Rich, Archbishop of Canterbury, found his love of learning at Oxford bringing its troubles. 'His Old Testament frowned down upon a love of se ular learning, from which Edmund found it hard to wean himself.' At last in a dream the form of his dead mother floated into the room where the teacher stood amidst his mathematical diagrams. 'What are these?' she seemed to say; and, seizing Edmund's right hand, she drew on the palm three circles interlaced, each of which bore the name of one of the Persons of the Holy Trinity. 'Be these thy diagrams henceforth, my son,' she cried; and her figure faded away. And so Edmund Rich learned to put first things first.

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE	COL. III. 12-17.
GOSPEL	S. MATT. XIII. 24-30.
FIRST MORNING LESSON	PROV. I.
FIRST EVENING LESSON	PROV. III. OR VIII.
SECOND LESSONS	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON.

Pleasant Ways and Peaceful Paths.

Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. PROVERBS iii. 17.

E must be sure that we understand well what 'wisdom' it is of which the wise man speaks. Therefore let me first read to you very carefully what 'wisdom' says about herself. 'The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was there: when He set a compass upon the face of the depth . when He established the clouds above; when He strengthened the fountains of the deep: when He gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment; when He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the

habitable part of His earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.'

No man could hear this allocution of 'wisdom' without seeing and feeling that it is, and must be, and can be only the Lord Jesus Christ. To none other can those high words belong. Therefore we learn at once never to disunite 'wisdom' and Christ—things which God has inseparably joined together. It is of that 'wisdom,' which has its root deep in Christian truth, which flows from Christ, which has drunk into the mind of Christ, which works for Christ, which glorifies Christ, which is identified with Christ, that the words are spoken, 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.'

And there is a certain exclusiveness about the expression which stands out into a necessary emphasis, strong in the first, stronger in the second, clause of the sentence. For of many things it may be said that some of their ways are pleasant, though some be bitter; and of a very few things indeed, perhaps it might be said that their paths are sometimes peace. But of nothing in the whole world save one—the life of a real child of God—could it ever be spoken so broadly, so universally, so absolutely, 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.'

It stands twin with that other true word of this greatest of all moral philosophers, 'The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it.'

In this high peace, then, which is thus pressed in its exclusiveness, you will do well to notice that there is a distinction drawn which is not without its special signification. It is the ways which are pleasant, and the paths which are peace.

Now the way is always larger and broader than the path. And the meaning may be this. The more general and public things in religion, things which all see and know, these are pleasant. But the things which retire back, and are most unfrequented, and which very few either see or guess, all these are peace. 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.'

The same discrimination is traceable in the verse, 'In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths.' Acknowledge God in the great things of life, and He will be sure to guide you in the small ones.

Let us take this difference of the ways and the paths to lead us on in our further consideration of the text.

Wisdom's way is, first, a high way. It is always reaching up out of littleness, it ranges at loftier levels, it has the world very much at its feet, it breathes a purer atmosphere, it is not entangled with small cares and trifling amusements, it is above party views, it is a

large-minded thing, it goes on at too high a pitch to use the common measurements, for it is always nearer heaven than earth.

And this is very pleasant, to be so free and independent of man's estimates and human judgments, to move in a pure, calm elevation of soul, beyond the common distractions, where the strife, and the noise, and the din, and the confusion do not come, to take large, grand, comprehensive views of everything, and to look at things more as angels look. There is great stillness, and there is great liberty in those altitudes of mind; that stillness and that liberty is wisdom's way, and it is 'a way of pleasantness.'

And wisdom's way always has one fixed mark. For that it steers. It throws lesser things aside as it goes, and it goes straight and earnest to a goal, and that goal is the glory of God. Therefore it is a way out of self, pointing to God, what will please God. And this singleness of aim gives a strength to the character; it gives unity to the whole man, and that unity is pleasantness.

And wisdom's way is, thirdly, a way of usefulness. It always puts usefulness first, before pleasure, before profit. It is a way of work. They who walk there are always serving, always ministering. Each one has his mission, each one his own express enterprise, which he has taken deliberately in hand to do good, either he comforts, or he advises, or he teaches; or he does something for the body, or he does something for the mind, of a fellow-creature; or in some way he is ameliorating the condition of man.

And have you yet to learn that the enjoyment of life is the labour that you throw into it? Is not every other way, though you choose to call it pleasure, satiating, wearying, unsatisfying, empty? To live for a purpose, for the purpose for which we were created and redeemed, to get to heaven, and for others to get there, to enjoy God, and make others taste the preciousness, to be happy and make happy, that is wisdom's way, and there is no way to be compared to it for pleasantness, with the way of that man who determines with himself that he will live to go about, and to do good.

And to go in wisdom's way is to go in sweet fellowships. They who walk there, perhaps the more because they are few, walk hand in hand. It is full of sympathies, it is a road which lies in the communion of all the saints, and all love all in wisdom's way. It is not a severe way, but a kind one, and it is so pleasant to be there, where the heart does more than the head, where the judgment is always kind, and the words are gentle, and the feelings brotherly. It was His way, and therefore there is a reality in that way, and it is a reality that is pleasant.

And there eternity comes in, with all its chastening grandeur; it is for ever, the works for ever, the friendships for ever, the relation is

for ever, the way is for ever. And this meets man in his aspirations, and matches him in his immortalities; the unseen is mingling with the seen, and things of faith stand out larger than the things we move in. The dawn of a brighter world is always breaking upon its horizon, and every prospect is lit up with some ray from heaven. And think you that it is a little thing to travel the road, where all that are good and holy have gone before us, where angels are always ministering?

Above all, Christ is there. They walk with Jesus, they lean on Jesus, they fill themselves with Jesus, they are satisfied with Jesus, and they shall travel on and reign with Jesus in that city where they go. And so it is pleasant here, but it shall be pleasanter there; and it is pleasanter and pleasanter every step we take, and 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness.'

But now, let us leave the wider track, and go down to one or two of the more secluded paths. For to all it is not always given to walk in ways of pleasantness, but none who really look for it shall ever miss the paths of peace.

There is a going out in a man's heart from its deepest places to Christ. He begins to affect Him. He tells Jesus something which has been long a hidden burden in his mind. And Christ listens to him, and he knows that Christ listens to him, and he feels it. And in the little path of that secret confession there is a peace which no words can tell.

And now there is an avenue open between that soul and God. It was an avenue long closed; but now it is open. And an act of faith travels along to the cross, and brings back a message of pure love, 'Your sins are forgiven.' It was a very small path that that faith took, but the 'peace passeth understanding.' I am quite sure that there is no peace worth the name, no peace for a moment to be put side by side with the peace of the simple feeling: I am forgiven.

And it is a side-path little trodden which leads out of the bustle of life, to go up to your own room and there to converse with your heart, with your Bible, and with God, for a little season. You may have left many scenes below; but I question whether there be any which will give you the same peace as those wise and still moments in the middle of the day, spent alone with God.

Or you go down from that communion with God to some very lowly thing. You determine you will humble yourself to some one who has offended you. You go and you occupy the inferior ground. You put a holy violence upon your nature, and you go into the dust, just where it is the hardest thing in the whole world to stoop. The world may call that self-abasement a mean-spirited thing, but you little care what the world calls it, when you know the peace.

Or you deny yourself some common gratification. You do it for conscience sake, and for love, and for Christ. It is quite a secret thing between you and God. And you may have lost an enjoyment, but you gain what is greater than any enjoyment in the whole world, you gain peace.

You lead a very retired life; and, though you do not know it, your quiet, consistent walk and your silent influence has been speaking for God. One has watched it, and seen it, and felt its power, and he has confessed to the reality of the religion, he has been won to seek your God. And your own feet will go on their happier way, shod with peace.

Shame, sorrow, parting, death, lie in the same wisdom's path. But neither shame, nor sorrow, nor parting, nor death is sin. And they cannot, one or all, take away a good conscience, nor obscure the light of the presence of God. Jesus's path lay just the same, through shame, through sorrow, through parting, through death. And wisdom's path and Jesus's path are both one; and both are peace.

I am speaking to some who are lovers of pleasure, and who are setting out at this time to try what pleasure life can give them. I have shown you a more excellent way, a pleasantness which no pleasure can ever match!

And there are some of you who, tired of pleasure, long for a better satisfaction. Lo, here is peace. 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.'

I have spoken of ways and paths which all lie this side the grave. But how can I yet tell of those beyond? But those ways of pleasantness and all those paths of peace are converging fast into that shining light, which, stretching upward, 'shineth more and more unto the perfect day,' where the 'rivers of pleasure' gush from the throne of God, and the waters are always satisfying.

JAMES VAUGHAN.

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE.

Light and Safety in Love

Col. iii. 12-17.

N the collect for this week we pray God to keep His 'Church and household continually in' His 'true religion;' and the epistle consists of a beautiful exhortation to all the graces of the Christian family, as it thus continues to abound more and more in all goodness and love. But the gospel for the day furnishes us with our Lord's own account of a state of things to be expected in the world, during the spread of His gospel, very different from this state of truth and charity prevailing; it is of His household, the Church, not continuing in true religion, of heresies and iniquities abounding. Therefore love as of one family will not be found. But the combination of these two, the loving appeals of the epistle taken together with the sad prophecy of the gospel, are in the highest degree edifying, and furnish a lesson most needful and seasonable to us at this time. For the faith of some is staggered, and that Christian love which the epistle describes waxes more cold in others, for their seeing in Christ's Church this state of things, while it is in fact no other than what the gospel foretold.

For that love which the epistle inculcates is indeed the remedy, the safeguard, and the light in these our troubles. Nothing can be right without it; nothing can be very wrong while this humble love continues. Love God, and love your neighbour, and try to do so more and more, humbling yourself. This is the best advice which can be given in times of religious doubt, of darkness and difficulty, such as now accompanies the great Epiphany. 'God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God.' 'By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one toward another.'

I. Put on therefore, says S. Paul to the Colossians, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies. 'Put on,' that is, as of something which ye had not before, which is not of nature, the 'new commandment' of Christ's love. He had just said, 'Put on the new man,' and here, 'put on bowels of mercies'—all that human compassion and tenderness which was seen in Christ when He took on Him our nature. The word perhaps alludes to the white clothing put on at baptism. Put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of

mind, meekness, long-suffering; and then, applying the same more particularly, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; if any man have a quarrel, or matter of complaint, against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. Literally, it is 'graciously accept' him, though you may have cause of blame, as Christ has been 'gracious' to you. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. 'Above all these,' because there is no need of forbearance, and forgiveness, and long-suffering, where there is love; for it includes it all: or it may be translated, 'upon all these,' or 'in addition to all these,' put on charity; in like manner as by S. Peter it is added as the last crown to other graces. And it is the 'bond of perfectness,' it is the perfect bond which unites together all in Christ. Our Lord, in S. Luke's Gospel, says, 'Be ye merciful as your Father in Heaven is merciful;' and in S. Matthew, 'Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect;' so that the very 'perfectness' of a Christian consists in this compassionate love.

II. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, let it 'rule,'—it is a peculiar word—let it 'sit as umpire' or 'arbiter' in your hearts to decide upon and moderate all differences; to the which also, he adds, ye were called in one body, this peace holding you all together as 'one body,' is the very object of your calling. And be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom; let it 'dwell in you richly,' *i.e.* with all aboundings of spiritual wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. Whatever is felt strongly is wont to find expression in melody and song; and if Christ dwells in the heart in all richness of wisdom, then such songs will partake of the same, like overflowing streams from the hidden fountains of God, refreshing, enlivening, fertilising all around, and making to abound in charity and thanksgiving to the praise of God. For here S. Paul combines the two, brotherly edification and thanksgiving; for he first says, 'admonishing one another,' and then adds, 'singing to the Lord with grace in the heart.' It is to God's glory that we thus sing; yet we cannot do so without benefiting others with this glad, this angelic service. For thankful love is like the flower, which cannot open its breast to Heaven but that at the same time it breathes incense around.

III. Nor in this are we left to ourselves, for the Spirit has Himself supplied us, and laid up in His Church a sacred treasury of 'psalms and spiritual songs,' rich in all the wisdom of God, full of all mutual admonishing and grace; with which the heart may find utterance with God on every occasion of thanksgiving; and may ever kindle its own flame anew from the altar.

But again, this voice of melody is not merely such as to break

forth in such strains of the tongue; but this clothing of thanksgiving is to cover all the life; this temper to colour all with hues from the heart. For S. Paul adds, And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him. 'If you eat,' says S. Chrysostom, 'give thanks to God before and after. If you sleep, give thanks to God before and after.' And so likewise he proceeds to apply it to every act of business we may undertake. It is not sufficient that we should have in all our actions a general intention of pleasing God; S. Paul evidently implies more than this; it is most desirable that we should form a constant habit of praying and giving thanks in the most ordinary things of life. 'I have set God always before me,' says the Psalmist. And nothing conduces so much to produce in us a lively sense of God's presence, and of our dependence upon Him, as in all occurrences, pleasant or painful, great or small; in all our doings, reading, conversing, walking, going in and out, making some definite act of prayer, or reverential earnest thought and aspiration, to Him in whom we live and move and have our being; bringing down upon everything the remembrance of the Lord Jesus; sanctifying everything by the all-saving Name. For the 'Name' of Christ is 'as ointment poured forth,' sweetening, hallowing, purifying every thought, word, and work.

Thus does the epistle contain a most engaging account of a perfect Christian life, which, as the collect expresses it, 'leans only upon the hope of God's heavenly grace,' and so is shielded in the evil day by His 'mighty power.' 'Salvation will God appoint,' says the Prophet, 'for walls and bulwarks.' 'Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee.' And when heresies prevail, and in consequence disputes and controversies in religion, this peace and love of God is as it were a sacred and sheltering 'tabernacle,' in which He will hide him 'secretly from the strife of tongues.' And what is of still greater consequence, it will tend much to keep him in the way of truth himself, from being swayed by passion or party zeal to the right hand or the left; the path of humility and love will open to himself fuller, larger, broader, deeper views of the mystery of Christ and the hidden life of the Spirit. Thus it is in speaking of this brotherly kindness and charity that S. Peter adds, 'For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

I. WILLIAMS.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL.

The Planting of Sin.

So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. S. MATTHEW xiii. 27-30.

I. HERE is always a certain relief in knowing the worst of a bad business. We can feel this when some bearer of ill news has given up the hopeless task on which he has been despatched of breaking it gently to us, and has surrendered all compassionate shufflings and disguises and compromises, and has blurted out the bare and naked truth. Is it that the bank has broken, in which all our main savings were lodged? If that be it that he has got to tell, then let him tell it. Let us have it all out. There is no good in pretending that perhaps it will not turn out to be quite so bad as it seems, or that it may be a mistake, or that the large proportion of the assets may yet be realised. No, the plain fact had better be faced. Many a man, who, under ordinary troubles is anxious and fussy and peevish, has disclosed a strange fund of strength, has discovered in himself even a spring of peace, in face of a sudden and undisguised calamity. The fiat of the doctor, breaking in upon a sunny life in which no peril was suspected, announcing that the hour has struck, that the terror has come, that death is inevitable, has shattered and dispersed all the minor infirmities which hung about the temper, and has carried with it a great calm. The surface waters which every breeze had rippled, which tossed and foamed in their ebb and flow every day, are withdrawn, and the quiet under-rocks of the life disclose themselves, the man listens to the words that had so often struck a chill into his veins even in mere imagination of their possibility, and, lo! he finds himself strangely controlled, unalarmed, and steady. The fate that all have to face is come, is here; and as all qualifications of its rigorous reality drop away, as all delays and postponements are swept aside, the force that is in us rises to the crisis. Something firm, resolute, and heroic speaks at last, 'Well, let me face the whole of it.'

Such is the strengthening relief which comes from knowing and facing the worst; and it is something of this which seems to speak

to us out of the quiet words of the householder in our Lord's parable, 'An enemy hath done this.' There is no attempt at escaping from the conviction. There is no glossing over the disaster, no protesting, no struggle, no anger. There is nothing more to be said. It has been done, and an enemy hath done it. 'An enemy hath done this.'

II. Deep and far back the words will carry us. They seem to issue in their patient calm out of that first hour when God the Father, moving in the evening amid the trees of the garden, called to the man that He had made to come out of his miserable hiding-place. There he stood—convicted, afraid, disgraced, fallen; he who had been made so good. It was all gone now—that blessed innocence, the hope of happy days, of sinless growth—gone the sweet companionship that might have sprung up so slowly and tenderly out of that early instinctive sense of God's presence—gone! The stain is on it now, the flaw started. The thing is done. The sin is there. Sin has crept in. The twist had been given, the germ was lodged, the taint had taken hold, and now that it was so there was no annulling it. It was to be accepted and faced. The effect must last on and last on to the very close. Wheat and tares—most melancholy mates—they must both grow together until the harvest. So He declares.

III. 'An enemy.' The calmness in the phrase seems to come out of the recognition of the evil's origin. 'It is the work of an enemy.'

Down below all the hubbub of wrongs which are accidental, which are due to necessity, which come through carelessness or folly or neglect or sloth—down below, if you search deep enough, you come upon a thing altogether different in kind, a thing not easily realised; and our Lord here detects it, unearths it, points it out with sure and deliberate emphasis. Consider, look close, examine it. It is an evil will, a will that means to do evil, and does it because it means it, a will that of choice prefers evil to good, a will that dislikes good, that finds it distinctly unpleasant and repellent. An enemy there is who intends to damage God who is the Father of good, an enemy conscious of his enmity, feeding on it, acting on it as a motive, rejoicing in iniquity, hating what God loves and loving what God hates, and in that hate and in that love putting out his force in defiance of God, and watching for a good on which God has set His heart, in order that he may have the pleasure of wrecking it, sowing tares out of no other motive but that of spoiling God's field, an enemy of God, a will that has grown to like evil for evil's sake. It is the soldier's quiet patience which is on the Lord—a patience which is aware of all that may befall, and is disconcerted by none, and lightly accepts the cruel disfigurements inseparable from a life lived in face of an unscrupulous foe. It is that brave patience which enables the Lord to recognise so temperately the ruinous wrong which has befallen

His kingdom. 'It is the enemy that hath done this,' so our Lord pronounces. Gazing far beyond our narrow horizons into that lowest abyss of sin, it is a living, breathing enemy whom He sees there.

There is an enemy abroad in the world, an enemy of God, and in recognising that and facing the worst, we can recover our calm. This earth, this human life, ceases to appear to us as the scene of moral confusion in which good is for ever tumbling into blunders which God ought surely to have made impossible, or at least to have set straight. No, life is a battle-ground, and there is a foe in front of us to fight, a foe bent on spoiling our good, on hurting us, on ruining our golden corn. He will get his hand in here and there. We must expect that our fondest hopes will suffer from his attack, that our best work will be touched by the dreary disappointment of it. And what a relief, what a comfort, as we look on at some cruel disaster that has overtaken us, at the broken fragments of some good joy, dearly loved, to say, not, 'Why has God done this? Why has God smitten me?' or 'Why this horrid accident? Why this meaningless misfortune?' but to say, 'The enemy hath done this—God's enemy and mine.' Not 'God has done it,' but 'the one who hates God—he has done it. He who hates good, and hates what I have done for good—this blow comes from him. It is a piece of direct malice. God hates it as much as I do, for it is against Him, against His honour that it is done in open warfare with Him. God and I therefore stand together in a common misfortune, in a common sorrow, warring against a common foe. The enemy hath done it.' As we read it, our stronger manhood rises to the ring of the war-cry, 'The foe is on us! Help, in the name of the Lord!' No longer whining, no longer protesting, we brace ourselves as soldiers called to sterner work. We set our faces like a flint. H. SCOTT HOLLAND.

Spiritual Sleep.

But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat.
S. MATTHEW xiii. 25.

WE read in the epistle of the beloved disciple of Christ this summary of His Master's work: 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.' And in the parable before us, taking the world for the field of general combat, and the hearts of individual men for the scenes, as it were, of its hand-to-hand encounters, the Son of God Himself indicates the special part which the Evil One plays in this tremendous struggle. The sowing of the good seed over the face of the earth is

represented as the Lord's own work. The sowing of the tares among the wheat is the work of the great Master Spirit of evil. *The* Enemy of man, as we may fairly call him, had never flagged in his active hostility since the day when he first compassed the original fall of man; but now his enmity rose to its fullest height, and was most openly proclaimed. Exasperated at man's redemption from his power by the Son of God, he stood revealed to us as the great adversary of Christ—as the Wicked One, whose work it is to spoil, to disfigure, and to destroy human souls which were made in the very image of God.

I. The parable before us reveals to us a most insidious peril, and it conveys to each one of us a solemn warning against a hidden danger to which we are all constantly exposed. That insidious peril is the possibility that we may live in the midst of Christian privileges, and conform to all the outward demands of our Christian calling, and yet that our hearts may be inwardly wrong in the sight of God. That hidden danger is a self-deception, so complete that even to ourselves we may appear as good and true as our neighbours, combined with the rapid approach of the time when God can no longer permit us to dwell in the world, and when, even to His forbearance, we have become intolerable. And the solemn warning which the parable conveys is, that the seeds of this fearful condition may have been secretly sown at a moment when we were least on our guard, and at an instant when the absence of any conscious wrong seemed to us most completely to guarantee our safety. Therefore it behoves us to keep the most earnest watch, each for his own self, lest, while we sleep, the Enemy, ever alive to the smallest opportunity, should sow tares within that portion of the Kingdom of God which is allotted to our special care and exclusive guardianship.

II. 'While men slept the enemy sowed tares.' The words irresistibly suggest, that if men could always remain awake to their danger, if they were fully conscious of the perils by which they are perpetually surrounded, unceasingly vigilant against the allurements of the senses, constantly on the watch for the approach of temptation—if, in fine, men never slept, it would become impossible for the subtlest foe to ensnare or lead them captive. Men who stand on their guard are alert, awake, watchful. From the frailty of their nature they cannot always stand upright, yet they will never so sleep at their post as to permit the enemy to inflict on them any lasting injury. Such sentinels, if they have let a single day slip by them unprofitably, will try to redeem it to-morrow. If pleasure seems to absorb a man like this too greatly, he will trample pleasure ruthlessly under his foot. If temptation of any kind has won a momentary triumph over him, his defeat will only increase his vigilance and his firmness.

It is not among men of this stamp that the Enemy wins his victories. His victims are those who are mentally and morally asleep, those whose minds and spirits are not stirred and fascinated by the great destinies of human life, those who do not believe that the future of the world depends on the due exercise of the talents intrusted to each individual, and the proper use of those opportunities which constantly occur in every sphere of life.

III. Let us endeavour to realise what this sleep means, of which the Evil One is ever prompt to take advantage. We are asleep if the duties of to-day are omitted; for to-day's failure entails upon us double duties to-morrow, with diminished powers and weakened inclinations to do them. We are asleep if our prayers are offered formally to-day, for there is imminent danger lest the formality should grow more and more confirmed, till it becomes nothing but the echo of bygone days, and real communion with God for ever ceases. We are asleep if to-day the voice of conscience is heard with indifference, for day by day its voice will be less strong, until it altogether sinks into silence, and no longer acts as our protector, our guide, and our monitor. We are asleep if our hearts do not expand in sympathies; if they are not deepened, ennobled, purified in affections; if they do not widen their circle of influence, and find constantly fresh subjects for guidance, pity, and benevolence. We are, in a word, asleep, if our susceptibility to what is good is not carefully watched and assiduously nurtured, lest, deafened to the cry of pain, and deadened to the appeals of Christ, it ultimately dwindles, contracts and shrivels into the narrow compass of selfish aims and ignoble purposes.

Let us then awaken out of sleep, for sleep is torpor, and torpor death. Let the sense of the unutterable mercy of God rouse our inactive souls—that mercy which still forbears to pluck us up, even when we are cumberers of the ground.

CANON PROTHERO.

The Wheat and Tares.

S. Matthew xiii. 24-30.

I. 'LET both grow together until the harvest' (S. Matthew xiii. 30).

(*a.*) The application of the parable.

'There are three things which Christ desired to signify in this parable. First, that in the Church there is not only good seed, that is, good men, but also bad seed, that is, evil men; second, that He is not the source of the bad seed, but of the good, and that the evil is

sown by the devil; lastly, that He will endure patiently the evil seed which has been sown by the devil, until the harvest, nor will He forthwith root it up. . . . All old commentators interpret the men who slept to be bishops, and those who have the care of ruling the Church: and the servants who inquired of the Lord, and desired to root up the tares, to be ardent servants of the Church.'

(*b.*) Our Lord here forbids persecution for matters of religion.

'Why are ye so hasty, He says, ye servants full of zeal? Ye see tares among the wheat, ye see evil Christians among the good; and ye wish to root up the evil ones; be quiet, it is not the time of harvest. That time will come, may it only find you wheat! Why do ye vex yourselves? Why bear impatiently the mixture of the evil with the good? In the field they may be with you, but they will not be so in the barn.'

(*c*) He teaches us a lesson of patience and forbearance.

'A solitary in a remote desert, having once uttered an uncharitable judgment against a brother, declares himself to have been thus admonished: "Immediately I was seized with sleep and an ecstasy, and I seemed to be on Mount Calvary, and there to see our Lord Jesus Christ between the thieves; and when I began to pray, and was drawing nearer, an angel, speaking with a loud voice, gave command to those who were standing by: 'Cast out this man, because he is as Antichrist to me; for before I judge he has judged his brother.' And when I was forcibly driven out, my cloak remained sticking in the door, which was immediately closed, and, leaving it, I came away. And immediately I awoke, and considering what I had seen, I said to the brother who had come to visit me: 'This is an unhappy day for me.' And he said, 'Why, father?' And when I had told him all, I added, 'My cloak, that is, God's protection which I enjoyed, I am deprived of."'

(*d*) God often punishes rash judgments which men pass upon others. 'Judge nothing before the time' (1 Corinthians iv. 5).

S. Vincent says: 'If you do not wish to fall, do not judge others. For it commonly happens that whoever judges another in anything is afterwards permitted by God to fall into the same fault, or a greater.'

II. The life of the Christian is to be identified habitually with Christ (Colossians iii. 17).

(*a.*) Exposition.

'Whether ye teach or labour, do nothing to your own glory, but to the glory of God; rendering thanks to God, who has deigned to send His Son to teach us these things; and furthermore, let thanks be rendered to God in your actions.'

'Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. When thou

sittest down to table, pray; when thou eatest bread, give thanks to the bountiful Provider of it; when thou drinkest wine, remember Him who bestowed it upon thee for gladness, and for a solace of thy infirmities: having put on thy tunic, bless Him; looking up to the heaven and the beauty of the stars, fall down before God, and adore Him who has founded them all in His wisdom. Thus when the sun rises and when it sets, in sleep and in the night watches, give thanks to God, who has created and ordained all these things to thy benefit, that thou shouldest know thy Creator, should love and praise Him.'

(*b.*) We are bound to do all things in the name of Christ, because we are saved by that name.

(*c.*) Christ reveals the Father to us (S. John xiv. 8, 9). Without Christ the mind of man cannot in any degree understand God, and the sinful heart of man shrinks away from God in fear.

(*d.*) The offices of Christ are priceless to the soul.

'Christ is offered and held forth to every particular person that expects to be saved by Him under three offices:—1, His prophetical; 2, His kingly; and 3, His sacerdotal. 1. By Christ's prophetic office, revealing His mind to us, we come to know His will. 2. Then by His kingly office, ruling and governing us, we come to yield obedience to that will. 3. And thirdly, by His sacerdotal or priestly office, we come to receive the fruit of that obedience in our justification and salvation. For we must not think that our obedience is rewarded with eternal life for its own merit, but it is the merit of Christ's sacrifice that procures this reward to our obedience.

(*e.*) Christ is our life.

'When Bishop Beveridge was on his death-bed he did not know any of his relatives or friends. A minister with whom he had been well acquainted visited him; and when conducted into his room he said, "Bishop, do you know me?" "Who are you?" asked the Bishop. Being told who the minister was, he said that he did not know him. Another friend came, who had been equally well known, and accosted him in a similar manner, "Do you know me, Bishop?" "Who are you?" said he. Being told his name, he was unable to recollect him. His wife then came to his bedside, and asked him if he knew her. But the dying man did not recognise even this his nearest relative. "Well," said one, "Bishop, do you know the Lord Jesus Christ?" "Jesus Christ!" said he, reviving, as if the name had produced on him the influence of a charm, "Oh, yes, I have known Him these forty years; precious Saviour, He is my only hope!"'

S. J. EALES.

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

Growing till the Harvest.

Let both grow together until the harvest. S. MATTHEW xiii. 30.

IMPATIENCE with evil is an old difficulty against which the history of the Church shows us we do well to be on our guard. And, yet, it is not merely this to which I desire to direct your thoughts, but to that which we are sometimes apt to forget even if we guard ourselves from impatience with it, viz., the warning of the continued presence of evil together with the good. Nay, more, the increase, the growth of evil, which we are to expect with the growth of good. 'Let both grow together.' In other words, we are not to suppose that the conflict between good and evil is at an end, or deceive ourselves with the hope that evil will gradually die away, and be merged in the good; but, on the contrary, however great the victories of faith may be, however much the leaven of the gospel may spread, yet evil will be evil still, and the power of evil and the malignity of evil greater in proportion as the good itself advances; both are to grow together.

I. To express what I mean in the language of Scripture and the ancient Church is simply to repeat the word Anti-Christ—for 1500 years the Church has been sheltered from any great and open persecution, and this long period of outward rest may well have taught us to forget the warning which Scripture gives, and to acquiesce in the more comfortable doctrine of the gradual prevalence of universal good. The difficulty and extreme danger of venturing upon the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy, the various attempts and failures which have been made in the interest of religious party spirit, all this and more may well cause men to leave out of sight the truth that I have named, and yet this was commonly taught by the early Christians, and was regarded by them as Scriptural; it forms, as many are aware, a substantial part of the catechetical instruction of one of the early writers. We preach not one advent only of Christ, but a second also, far more glorious than the former. 'Let us not rest in His first advent, but look also for His second,' and then, with a warning against pretended knowledge of the very time of His coming, He adds, as to the time let no man be curious, and again venture not to declare when these things shall be, nor on the other hand abandon thyself to slumber. Then follow the signs of Anti-Christ instructing the catechumen that before the end the ruthless, murderous, merciless, crafty spirit of Anti-Christ will prevail, and chiefly that this relentless spirit will be displayed against the saints of God, so that

the martyrs of former persecutions would be excelled in their sufferings by the martyrs who are yet to be. Who then, he concludes, is that blessed man who shall at that time devoutly witness for Christ? for I say that those martyrs excel all martyrs, for hitherto they have only wrestled with men; but the martyrs in the time of Anti-Christ shall do battle with Satan in his own person. And this was regarded as a practical doctrine. Take precautions then, O man; thou hast the signs of Anti-Christ; do not merely keep them in mind thyself, but impart them also freely to all; if thou hast a child, according to the flesh, now admonish him of this.

Such was the future for which the early Christians prepared themselves and those they taught. Not that they pretended to foretell the day or hour when the Son of Man would come, but they lived waiting for Him, looking for his sign in the heavens and that sign they commonly interpreted to be the sign of the cross, and therefore consistently with this they expected the second Advent would be preceded by a time of trouble, that there would be a falling away first, that Anti-Christ would come, and that iniquity would abound, that evil would grow to its full ripeness, and then the earth would be reaped and the evil, separated for ever from the good. And all this they taught as the teaching of Scripture.

II. How terrible the last trial will be, we are not able to imagine, but we may look back to these great persecutions which have already been and remember that the trials of the last day are to be at least greater than these. 'Such as has never been before,' is the measure that we know: thus some have thought it well to dwell from time to time on the great conflicts which God has permitted to befall His Church such as that in the time of Antiochus when the school of the heathen was established in Jerusalem, and the city filled with deceit, when the children were left uncircumcised and the Books of the Law rent in pieces, and burnt in the fire, when the king's commandment was that every one should leave his laws, and that all should be one people to the end that they might forget the law and change all the ordinances. When the burnt-offerings were forbidden, and the Sabbath ordered to be profaned. When the king entered proudly into the sanctuary and took away the golden altar, and the candlestick of light, when he set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar, and builded idol altars throughout the cities of Judah on every side, and burnt incense in the streets—in all this there was misery, suffering of the body, as when women were murdered, their houses rifled, and their infants hanged about their necks, and there was suffering of mind, perplexity, violation of conscience, destruction of the most sacred emblems of the faith. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we have the sufferings of the Jewish saints summed

up in language which recent events seem to make more real. 'They were tortured not accepting deliverance, they had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder; they were tempted; they were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented.'

Others have pointed to the Emperor Julian as in a degree typical of the Anti-Christ who is to come; others to Mahomet; others again to the terrors of the French Revolution, when many of the marks of Anti-Christ seemed to have been realised and blasphemy and pagan worship supplanted the Christian faith. And we in our own day have received warning sufficiently plain to remind us that the power of evil is not less fearful than of old. Whatever may have been the rights of the recent German and French war, the unchecked powers of the victorious army, the besieging a modern capital, and the occupation of a whole country, at least, witnessed to the existence of a power which was little expected, and to results which would have been called impossible in the present time. For myself I confess it is still like a dream, like a legend of the past, which one would have considered impossible to repeat: and yet that mysterious march of victory is as peace and order compared to the miseries and wicked cruelties of the national hostilities which followed; the useless ruin of a lovely city, the massacre of priests and bishops, all this in our day is enough to warn us that the evil is evil still. That there are powers still existing, and not so far away, which may yet accomplish the work of Anti-Christ, and bring upon the Church of God a persecution such as has not been.

The evil is evil still, and will grow together with the good till the end. Be not impatient of this, be not unprepared for it, be not needlessly alarmed at it. 'Keep innocency and take heed to the thing that is right. As for the transgressors they shall perish together, and the end of the ungodly is they shall be rooted out at the last, but the salvation of the righteous cometh of the Lord, who is their strength in the time of trouble. The Lord shall stand by them and save them, He shall deliver them from the ungodly and shall save them because they put their trust in Him.'

BISHOP KING.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS.

The Book of Proverbs.

My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. PROVERBS i. 10.

I. HE lessons of this book begin, we may say, in the nursery. Over and over again we are warned how much early training matters, how serious even childish faults are. 'Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.' And so through life. The vices and follies of each age and position find description as pointed, as true—the false balance of the tradesman, the false judgment of the bribed or perverted judge, the contentiousness of a quarrelsome home, the vanity of the old who would be thought young, the cruel treatment of dumb animals. And the vices of all ages and ranks alike—sloth, pride, falsehood, revenge. But a special interest and place is given to the temptations of young men—temptations which arise from their circumstances, their inexperience, their unproved freedom, in part from their very graces, generosity, and simplicity, in part from the designing persons and corrupting influences by which they are surrounded —the money-lender (a most vivid portrait in chapter vi.), bad men and women of all kinds, the poor fools of their own age who have been deceived before them. All through the book we hear warnings against three special dangers, debt, profligacy, hard drinking— 'Look not on the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup. . . . In the end it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.' But the first nine chapters, which form a separate, and the only ordered and consecutive, part of the book, deal more in full with the opportunities and trials of a young man's life. It is painted in some degree after the manner of the famous ancient fable, the Choice of Hercules, which tells how, when he was at the age when young men, as they become masters of themselves, begin to show whether they will take the path of good or evil, he was sitting by himself and thinking which path he should himself take. Just at this moment there approached two women, both of more than human stature, both fair to see, but one with the graces of sweet and modest simplicity, the other bedizened with finery, self-conscious, and watching for admiration. The latter accosted him first and bade him follow her, and promised him a path of ease and perpetual delight

—no toil, no self-denial—he should live on the labours of others, and never know stint. He asks her name. 'My friends,' she said, 'call me Happiness; but my enemies nickname me Vice.' Then the other speaks, and tells him that she was the friend of his parents, and bids him follow her. She will not promise pleasure; nothing really good can come without some pain and labour. She warns him against the fair words of Vice, telling him that all the pleasant things of which she had spoken lay at the beginning of her path, the pains were kept for the end; that though an immortal she was cast out from heaven, and loathed by all good and honest men; whereas she (Virtue) promises a path ever brighter and happier, the company of the good, the favour of the gods, the love and admiration of men.

II. When we go more into detail there are two chief sources of temptation which Solomon indicates in these chapters, and which, when we have done what is very easy, stripped off the figure, or the accidental circumstances of age and time, are not less applicable to our days than to his.

(1.) The first is sensuality—figured and summed up in that repeated picture of the 'strange woman which flattereth with her tongue; which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God. . . . None that go unto her return again, nor take hold of the path of life.'

(2.) The other is that of evil companionship. You may see in the second chapter the two distinguished very clearly and put as the two things from which wisdom, discretion, understanding, should preserve you.

'He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but the companion of fools shall be destroyed.' 'Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished.' 'Fools make a mock at sin.' That is the wise king's judgment on the light and silly excuses with which young persons, and old too, disguise from themselves their first steps in the path of destruction.

E. C. WICKHAM.

The Lessons of Proverbs.

The prosperity of fools shall destroy them. PROVERBS i. 32.

IT is sometimes said of the Book of the Proverbs, almost by way of disparagement, that its tone is prudential rather than religious; that it deals with men's outward behaviour more than with the inner relation of the soul to God. Its sententious form and shrewdness of expression seem unsatisfying to those who cannot conceive of deep religion set forth in the plain language of everyday life,

and who can only appreciate it in the more spiritual phraseology of the New Testament, or the evangelical prophets of the Old. It is therefore worth while to recall the fact to our minds that no healthier exposition of practical religion can be found than the rules of a pure morality that has its basis in a profound belief that there is a God that judgeth the earth. We are too familiar with the phrase, often used in passing judgment upon our neighbours, that 'morality is not religion.' We have no wish to forget it, nor to deny the amount of truth which it conveys. But we shall be wise to remember that, in another sense, 'religion is not morality'; nor can it be made, under any circumstances, a substitute for it. And yet the attempts at such a substitution form some of the saddest passages in the records of churches, and the history of individuals.

It does not derogate from the worth and dignity of a moral or religious system that the advantage of virtue and the folly of vice should be brought boldly into the foreground. When Satan is introduced as asking, with a sneer, 'Doth Job serve God for nought?' he may be supposed to be representing morality as an ingenious scheme of self-seeking, a sordid system of barter with God, and with the laws which He has impressed on the universe.

But man's service to God need not be less noble, less pure, less self-sacrificing, because God lets him know that his true wisdom and true happiness lie in the path of duty.

We do not know what special circumstances decided the particular form of the Book of Proverbs. It has its analogies in the literature of many nations, notably in the Greek gnomic poets or philosophers —in Hesiod and Theognis. There is something cosmopolitan in its style, the result of a national observation, which a fuller intercourse with other peoples has developed, or is developing.

The primary intention of the wise king may have been to furnish a directory, or a body of precepts, for his son Rehoboam; but the more immediate interest for us is that the book—as its contents amply show—is meant to be an adequate monitor in the days of an advancing civilisation, when life in large cities has introduced new luxuries and various temptations; when commerce, and wealth, and the arts have intensified all capabilities of enjoyment, and complicated the whole system of society. With a power, a freshness, a pungency, that have lost nothing in thirty centuries of transmission, the counsels of Solomon appeal to us in our own day. We still feel the heart and conscience pricked by their keenness and point; still is the matter driven home and clenched by their straightforward plainness. 'The words of the wise,' as the preacher declared, 'are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies.'

The keynote of the whole book, heard through an infinity of har-

monies, is thus expressed by the author at the very outset. 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom.' And, by way of emphasising this truth, he exhibits from every possible point of view the connection between sin and folly.

I. Shrewd and thoughtful men in different ages have seen this connection clearly enough. It finds a place in Homeric theology: it points the sneer in Horace's satires. The Roman moralist found it an easy task to show vice in a contemptible or ridiculous light. The epic poet used words that he knew his hearers could appreciate when he called sin by the name of infatuation. It was an Até, or judicial blindness, sent upon men by the severity, or perhaps by the malevolence, of the gods. It served to account for the haughty defiance of the lord of the sea, which brought a dismal death to the Oïlean Ajax: it was accepted as at once the cause and the excuse of the faithlessness of Helen. 'If they had known the things that belonged to their peace,' these sinners would never have fallen; 'but they were hid from their eyes.'

A warning voice against the folly of sin rings through the whole of the Book of Proverbs. The life of the fool is clearly traced therein, and his characteristics pointedly marked. To preserve men from destruction, to warn them from its dangers, to reclaim them when they have fallen away, is the high purpose of this Book. There is no means which the author will not use to save the foolish from themselves—he will plead, he will threaten, he will denounce, he will crush with scorn. But the best and mightiest weapon in his armoury is his method of showing them 'a more excellent way'; and to do this he will darken the picture of vice by setting forth the 'beauty of holiness'; and he will win men from folly by the attractiveness of the vision of a 'Wisdom that is from above.'

II. 'The turning away of the simple,' saith Wisdom in the text, 'shall slay them; and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.' Little did the simple man realise that, at the moment of his turning away, he had reached the place where the roads fork; and where one path scales the shining stair of heaven, while the other is the downhill road to hell. He was so simple, so easily led; and yet so strong in his own weakness. So childish and short-sighted, and so confident in the keenness of his view, and obstinate in his silly self-complacency, and yet it wanted but a little humility to make him ready to receive instruction; it wanted but an open ear for the counsels of those who were his true friends; and the simpleton, instead of being lost through his simpleness, might have got Wisdom for his own, and have found her ways to be ways of pleasantness and paths of peace. Little did the fools imagine that their prosperity was working out their destruction. But here let us make up our minds exactly what is intended

by prosperity, and do not let us, by any fanciful definition of the word, flatter ourselves that we lie outside the dangers that are said to wait upon it. We have no need to limit it to the possession of such large wealth as leaves no wish ungratified that money can secure. It does not imply a success that is always at flood-tide, and that seems to carry us on, as it were, upon its current, to the attainment of all that we desire.

It is something far more widely distributed than this: it describes a state in which most of us in this place very largely share.

By prosperity we need mean nothing else than a life with powers of enjoyment in the present; and hope enough to give a warm colour to the future. A life of comfort, ease, sufficiency, full of ever-expanding interests, gladdened by happy friendships, and stimulated by honourable ambition. This is nothing rare. How many of us here would complain if our life fell short of this estimate of prosperity? But, in God's name, do not let us make it the prosperity of fools! For such it becomes the very instant that we regard it as all-sufficient for us; so that it breeds an independence of God, a neglect of His law, a disparagement of His claims. Our prosperity is the prosperity of fools, when it induces us, through our opportunities of indulging our bodies and feasting our minds, to starve and debase our souls. Then indeed do we pass over into the ranks of those of whom S. Paul solemnly declares that they 'became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened: professing themselves to be wise, they became as fools.'

The incarnation of Wisdom in this passage at which we have glanced seems, as we study it, to lead us into a larger field of thought. It passes from the vagueness of a picture of abstract perfection, from the symbolism of an angelic vision, into a higher Christian reality. The form of the speaker is transfigured before us, and a voice seems to reach us 'from the excellent glory,' 'This is my beloved Son; hear ye Him.' The Wisdom which speaks in the Book of Proverbs is the 'Word that was with God, and was God,' the declaration of whose eternal Sonship forms the lofty introduction to S. John's Gospel. The gracious invitation of Wisdom to the children of men is but the rehearsal of yet more winning words, that make at once the blessedness and the responsibility of the Christian life. The bidding of Wisdom rests on the claim of man's highest duty and his highest interest. The call of Christ adds to this all the constraining power of love. 'Turn ye at my reproof,' saith Wisdom, 'and I will pour out my Spirit upon you, I will make known my words unto you.' 'Come unto Me,' saith Christ, 'take up thy cross and follow Me'; and He adds His own promise beside—'I will give you a Comforter, who shall abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth . . . as

My Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you; abide ye in My love.'

Must we carry the parallel still further? If our text tells us of a rejection of Wisdom, so our conscience tells us that there is a rejection of Christ that is repeated day by day in the great city of the world. Have we any part in that? Is our prosperity to be the barrier between our souls and His service? Our life here has its stirring business, its thrilling excitements, its refined and delicate pleasures, its keen stimulus for the most active intellect. It cries to us with manifold voices that kindle our whole being, that wake our wonder and expectancy, that quicken thought and desire, and whisper to us of infinite possibilities and unimaginable hopes. This is a very glorious prosperity. But it has its own grave danger, if it can make us deaf to the call of Christ. It ought to elevate us, but sometimes instead of that it seems only to absorb and enthral. And, thus, the only response to His invitation may be a chilling silence; or, haply, we may thrust it from us with an irritability, an impatience, and a selfish fear, that bears only too terrible a resemblance to the bitter appeal of the evil spirits that haunted the demoniac of Gadara—'Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Jesus Thou Son of God. Art Thou come hither to torment us?'

If we could realise for a moment the time when life must be stripped of its prosperity; when the days come in which a man must say, 'I have no pleasure in them'; when the voices of this world have lost their charm, or are growing silent around us; when we stand almost face to face with the realities of an unseen world which we have chosen to ignore! Shall we be ready then, at the eleventh hour, eagerly to accept an invitation that we have so long set at nought? Will it still be open; shall we know where to go for it; how to listen to it? And what if this answer come to the hapless seeker in his extremity, 'I will not be inquired of by you'? Pitifully sad would it be if the only confession left to us was the bitter lamentation which the writer of the Book of Wisdom assigns to the ungodly, 'We have gone through deserts,' they say, 'where there was no way; but as for the way of the Lord, we have not known it. What hath pride profited us, or what good hath riches with our vaunting brought us? . . . the hope of the ungodly is like dust that is blown away with the wind, like a thin froth that is driven away with the storm, it passeth away as the remembrance of a guest that tarrieth but a day. But the righteous live for evermore; their reward also is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the Most High. Therefore shall they receive a glorious kingdom, and a beautiful crown from the Lord's hand; for with His right hand shall He cover them, and with His arm shall He protect them.'

W. W. MERRY.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE.

Strange Solitude.

Without God in the world. EPHESIANS ii. 12.

HE world is full of God. Nature recognises her Creator, and rejoices in Him. 'The heavens declare the glory of God—the firmament sheweth His handiwork.' The dumb creation looks up to Him—'the lions roaring after their prey do seek their meat from God.' Who then can measure the depths of utter solitude in which that soul dwells which is 'without God in the world'?

And this was the strange, sad solitude in which the Ephesians of old, with all their culture, all their greatness, and their commerce, and their magnificent temple of the goddess Diana, dwelt before the glorious light of the gospel shone upon them. Not that they were without some general notion of a deity, for they worshipped many gods; but without any regard for the one true God; any acknowledged dependence on Him; any special interest in Him. 'Then,' the Apostle reminds them, 'in those sad days ye were aliens . . . having no hope, and without God in the world!'

I. But the words are not only very sad, they are more—they are very humbling words. They describe not only 'the heathen, in his blindness, bowing down to wood and stone,' in the dark places of the earth, but they describe many souls in enlightened lands, in an enlightened age. We need not so much as to cross the Channel, and look into the national life of our Continental neighbours, to find hundreds of men and women who are living 'without God in the world.'

There are the many heathen in our own great cities—those who, literally, know not God; there are the hundreds of those who, knowing Him, have forsaken Him; have banished God from their homes, and out of their lives. To some, moving in 'good society'—to others, who form the dregs of our population, the Apostle's words apply, 'without God in the world.'

II. There are scores of people whose whole life is a contradiction. With their lips they confess God; in their lives they deny Him. They tell you that they believe in God—but they never serve Him. They have no love for Him. His service is altogether a weary

burden to them. They will speak about God, but they will always have some excuse for absence from His House. The fact is that they care nothing for God. He has no place in their thoughts, or in their lives. Practically they are atheists—they live 'without God in the world.'

Then this is to live without light. A man may have plenty of brains, plenty of cleverness. But there comes a day when earthly wisdom fails; an hour in which he grows confused and loses his way; when he learns that the light within him is darkness—that he has been following a will-o'-the-wisp, which has led him on to a trackless moor and there left him. The darkness is fast coming on—the darkness of death—and he is without light, amid the encircling gloom.

Again, it means living without hope. Those of you who have found out the instability of all earthly hopes, have learnt, perhaps, in proportion, the solemn beauty of the words, 'God is our Hope!' A hopeless life is his who is 'without God in the world!'

J. B. C. MURPHY.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS.

Christ our Peace. Col. iii. 15.

We once saw an earnest engineer who was praying most importunately for faith in Christ and for peace to his troubled soul. But, while he prayed, a cloud of darkness gathered across his horizon. And against that cloud, which swung like a funeral pall before his vision, played the strange lightnings of the Almighty's wrath. The thunders of God's law roared against him. Instead of peace came only the sword, instead of the calm he sought came the fearful tempest; and under the stress of its terrors the poor baffled soul betakes himself to the 'covert' which Christ had raised on Calvary. There he finds the peace he so earnestly prayed for.

Peace in Danger. Col. iii. 15.

A west of Ireland papist, who with his fellow-islanders had a few hours before been ready to murder a Protestant missionary, who had visited his island with a boat-load of orphan children to demonstrate to them the benefits of Christian instruction, was voluntarily rowing the party back to the mainland in a storm which had suddenly come on. 'You must not speak or move,' he said to the children, 'or we shall all be swamped.' One of the girls, well accustomed to the wild shore life, replied: 'We will

not move, for that would be dangerous, but we may speak;' and, turning to her companions, she said: 'Let us sing—

'"Why those fears? Behold, 'tis Jesus
Holds the helm, and guides the ship."'

As the melody of those sweet words mingled with the wild rage of the elements, the tears trickled down the old man's cheeks; and when the hymn ceased, turning to the missionary, he said: 'Well, sir, if children can sing like that in such a storm, the religion you teach them must be something different from anything we have ever been taught, and from this day I am determined to help the school all in my power.' The school was speedily opened and was a great success, being held in the house of the man who, pitchfork in hand, had threatened to murder the missionary if he dared to step on shore.

Peace in Danger. Col. iii. 15.

Renwick, the last of Scottish martyrs, wrote: 'I may say this, indeed, that the Lord suffers not my work, however insupportable to flesh and blood, to be burdensome to me; for though the world think my case most miserable, yet I think it is so happy that I know not a man this day upon the face of the earth with whom I would exchange my lot. Yea, though Christians had not a heaven hereafter, I cannot but judge their case, even here, happy beyond all others, as the Psalmist saith: 'Thou hast put gladness,' etc. And when the world frowns most, I know it is the time wherein the Lord smiles most upon his own. Oh, therefore let none of them fear a suffering lot. Enemies think themselves satisfied that we are put to wander in dark stormy nights through mosses and mountains; but if they knew how we were feasted when others are sleeping, they would gnash their teeth for anger.'

God's Love of Peace. Col. iii. 15.

Of all the birds the dove is the most easily alarmed and put to flight at hearing a shot fired. Remember that the Holy Ghost is compared to a dove; and if you begin to shoot at each other, the heavenly Dove will take wing and instantly leave you. The Holy Spirit is one of love and peace, not of tumult and confusion. He cannot live among the smoke and noise of fired shots: if you would grieve the Holy Spirit and compel Him to retire, you have only to commence firing at one another, and He will instantly depart.

Praise, a Means of Grace. Col iii. 16.

A servant girl in great anxiety of soul sought the help of her clergyman. All his explanations of the gospel, and applications of it to her case, failed to bring peace. She said she had tried to pray, but dared not speak to God. 'If you cannot pray,' said the clergyman, 'perhaps you can

praise.' He went on to show that it was God who had graciously begun to stir her soul, giving her concern about salvation, and some feeling of sorrow for her sins. He told her that she would greatly add to her sins if she failed to thank Him for this grace; but if she praised and blessed God for what He had done, she would soon find that He who had begun the good work would carry it on to the praise of the glory of His grace. And to commence this exercise, he recommended her to go home singing the glorious 103rd Psalm, 'O thou, my soul, bless God the Lord.' She departed with a light heart, singing as she went; 'and,' said the minister in telling the story, 'she is singing still, praising and praying and rejoicing with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.'

The Law of thy Mother. Prov i. 8.

John Ruskin, in counting up the blessings of his childhood, reckoned these three for first good: Peace: he had been taught the meaning of peace in thought, act, and word; had never heard father's or mother's voice once raised in any dispute, nor seen an angry glance in the eyes of either, nor had ever seen a moment's trouble or disorder in any household matter. Next to this he estimates obedience—he obeyed word or lifted finger of father or mother as a ship her helm, without an idea of resistance. And lastly, faith—nothing was ever promised him that was not given; nothing ever threatened him that was not inflicted, and nothing ever told him that was not true.

Unconscious Danger. Prov. i. 27.

There is an account of the defeat, forty years ago, of the troops of a distinguished general in Italy. Having taken their stand near Terni, where the waters of the river Velino rush down an almost perpendicular precipice of three hundred feet, and thence toss and foam along through groves of orange and olive trees toward the Tiber, into which it soon empties, they attempted, when pressed by the Austrians, to make their escape over a bridge which spanned the stream just above the falls. In the hurry of the moment, and all unconscious of the insufficient strength of the structure, they rushed upon it in such numbers that it suddenly gave way, and precipitated hundreds of the shrieking and now despairing men into the rapid current below. There was no resisting such a tide when once on its bosom. With frightful velocity they were borne along toward the roaring cataract and the terrific gulf whence clouds of impenetrable mist never ceased to rise. A moment more, and they made the awful plunge into the fathomless abyss, from which, amid the roar of the waters, no cry of horror could be heard, no bodies, or even fragments of bodies, could ever be rescued. The peril was wholly unsuspected, but none the less real, and ending in a 'destruction' none the less 'swift.'

May we not see in this the picture of a great throng of immortal men in respect to their *moral* end? It seems generally to be assumed that, in our relations to eternity, there is no danger except that of which we are distinctly conscious,—which we see, or hear, or feel. But there cannot be a greater delusion. It would be equally rational for the blind man, who wanders among pit-falls, or on the trembling brink of some frightful precipice, to infer that there is no danger because he sees none. Insensibility to danger is, in fact, one of the most startling characteristics of the sinner's condition by nature, just as insensibility in a mortal disease is one of the most alarming symptoms of the disease itself.

Giving a Tenth to the Lord.
Prov. iii. 9.

Mrs. Isabella Graham had received £1000 unexpectedly, and, true to the godly habit which she had maintained through days of affluence and days of straitness, she put £100 at once into the bag, which had never received so large a sum before. The circumstance was never mentioned by her; but after her death this entry was found in her diary: 'Quick, quick, before my heart gets hard.'

I Love them that Love Me.
Prov. viii. 17.

This incident is found in the life of Reginald Heber, Lord Bishop of Calcutta. 'One day when Reginald was at the age of fourteen, his mother missed her *Companion to the Altar*. Search was made for it among all the servants, but it was nowhere to be found. After three weeks' fruitless inquiry, it was given up as lost, till at length she happened to mention it to Reginald, who immediately brought it to her, saying it had deeply interested him; and he begged permission to accompany his mother to the altar when the sacrament was next administered. Penetrated with gratitude to God for giving her so pious a son, Mrs. Heber burst into tears of joy as she cheerfully assented to his request.'

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

Scriptures proper to the Day.

EPISTLE	S. JOHN III. 1-8.
GOSPEL	S. MATTHEW XXIV. 23-31.
FIRST MORNING LESSON	PROVERBS IX.
FIRST EVENING LESSON	PROVERBS XI. OR XV.
SECOND LESSONS	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON.

Self-Discipline.

Beloved, now we are the sons of God, and it doth not appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. 1 S. JOHN iii. 2.

PREACHERS have often drawn attention to the practical character of the epistles during the Sundays in Epiphany; and, indeed, the contrast between the main subject of the successive gospels and the direct personal morality of the epistles is sharp and surprising. The subject of the Epiphany does not at first sight lead us to expect this practical application. It lifts our thoughts high into the upper mysteries of salvation. It summons us to face the amazing secret of God laid open now to the heart of the Apostle of the Gentiles whose feast we still keep—that mystery which had been hid in Christ from the beginning of the world when He created all things in Jesus Christ; and which was even now, he tells us, the object of adoration to all the principalities and powers in heavenly places, as they gazed into this disclosure of the manifest wisdom of God according to that eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. That is the Epiphany, the manifestation, of Christ to the whole world in its full and eternal significance. Could any-

thing be more uplifting, more far-reaching? S. Paul's own mind, we know, staggers at the weight of this glory, at the abundance of the unsearchable riches that lie stored in this action of God. And then, as we pass under the influence of the first epistle, our eyes are turned naturally towards the historic deed in which that manifestation took place; we are absorbed by the contemplation of that Blessed Person in whom the light broke. And so in gospel after gospel we are shown Him, first in His cradle-manger, already become the centre of mysterious movements over the wide face of the earth—we are shown how an impulse had shaken the deep thought of the ancient world, how the stars in high heaven had found a voice to tell of Him, and how their whisper stole abroad and entered into the ears of those brooding men, and lo! we are shown them journeying far out of the East to the stable where He lay, and bowing low with all their hoarded wisdom before the Babe, and laying at His infant feet gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. That was our first gospel, and then we are bidden watch Him as He flashes in with the freedom and simplicity of innocence on the burdened learning of doctors whose pride was in the Law. Their eyes are suddenly dazzled by the bright freshness of this frank and sinless boy, as He breaks in upon their laborious search after truth with His quick questions and answers. The gleam of the dawn of God illuminates the patience of their long waiting; the night will soon pass to those faithful watchers. Let them be of good cheer. Nay, the night is even now departing; the day is at hand. Then again, on the second Sunday our eyes are fixed on that first omen of His coming work as it escapes from Him at Cana, under the urgency of His Mother's hasty invocation. The energy of salvation is held still in reserve. None of His disciples or those who were in the secret knew that the power that was there at the marriage feast was on the edge of its open manifestation; and already the water of the older purification felt the glory of God that was near, and trembled into wine. That was the beginning of miracles in which He manifested forth His glory, and His disciples believed on Him. And still it is the glory of the Lord which we watch in its revelation of the gospel of last Sunday, as the curse which the older covenant could only emphasise, but could never wipe away, fell off like scales from the kneeling leper who rose to feel himself clean. And it is the same glory which we are shown in the heart of the Roman centurion, that made known to him the one supreme authority of which all human lordships are but the type and shadow. And in the gospel of to-day we are taught to watch this glory as it falls on the sea, and the winds drop, and the waters sink, and there is a great calm—calm in the wild rout of the natural world as it tosses and is then quiet and calm; and in the fierce

heart of man, torn with devils, all the violence passes away and is drowned in the depths of the sea, and he sits at the feet of the Master clothed in a strange peace with the mind rightly possessed. And then next Sunday it will be the same light that still is shown us in the parable of the tares, directing and interpreting the entire interval between the sowing of the seed and the harvest, shining on in its sure patience undisturbed by the conspiracies of those who steal into the darkness of the night to undo the good work. And lastly, we shall be told how the same light then grew into the perfect day, according to the truth revealed to us in the gospel for the Sixth Sunday, when the Son of Man appears in the heavens, and the elect gather from the four winds, at the sound of the last trumpet. That is the Epiphany, the open secret, the manifestation of the Eternal Son—the manifestation of the mystery as the gospels bid us contemplate it.

And then, all in between, Sunday after Sunday, the epistles pluck us down from this high thinking; they drag our eyes, as it were, off the Lord, whose every motion and deed we would wonderingly wait upon, and root our gaze upon ourselves. Our own little words, thoughts, feelings, acts—these are what we are to be forced to scan and to weigh, and to consider, and to appraise; with strict and minute appreciation we are to bring ourselves to book. Every bit of detail, every fragment of conduct, is to be forced under real and anxious scrutiny with elaborate completeness. Directions and regulations, warnings and commandments, pour in on every side. Our personal private management of our own lives is the concern to which all the significance is given. Just let us cast a glance along these epistles, and see how every department of life is handled in its turn.

First, there is the body. We must take care of that. The Apostle is earnest, in the epistle for the First Sunday after Epiphany, in beseeching us by the mercies of God to be very watchful in this task—in this intelligent service, which needs the full power of forethought and resolution if we are ever to present these bodies as a living sacrifice, such as God could actually view with favour and with pleasure as something undamaged, unspotted, sound and whole in every part. And then, after the body there is the mind. That is to be transformed by a gradual process of renewal, he tells us, which will purge it of its old instinctive conformity to the world, those habits and standards we had lived in; and will build up in it a faculty and apprehension, a sensitiveness of touch, by which it will respond with rapid readiness to all those motions by which the will of God prompts it towards that which is good and desirable and perfect. And then, moreover, as the mind bends to the control of this directed will, it will have to learn its proper place in society and in the Church;

it will have to subordinate itself to the general excellence of the whole. It will be set to one task and not to another, and therefore it must possess itself of the spirit of humility, of sobriety, and self-control; it must recognise the place and office of others, as well as of itself, inasmuch as each has its proper gift according to the measure which God deals out to him. Let no man, therefore, think more highly of himself than he ought to think. And this careful discipline to which the epistle for the First Sunday exhorts the believer is so important that it is continued in the Sunday following. Each member in the body of Christ has its peculiar virtue by which its special work is best fulfilled; and each member, therefore, must make sure what that special virtue is, and devote himself to its cultivation with singular patience, confining himself to his own proper development. If it be teaching, then let him strive above all things to perfect himself as a teacher; if it be his office to preach, then let him not try to devote himself to do everything at once, but to do all that is needful for the preacher; if it be his part to give alms, then let him take care that that special temper in which alms are best disposed is his—simplicity of intention; if he be called to rule, then let him see to it that his diligence never slackens, for in diligence lies the excellence of a ruler; if he find himself engaged in acts of relief and of kindness, then let him watch with special care, and retain that kindly cheerfulness which gives the finest and most delicate character to all acts of mercy. And then there are a number of things to attain to one after another. The love of our neighbour must be kept from all unreality; evil in the heart must be not only abstained from but abhorred; we must not faintly drag ourselves after the good, but keenly and regularly believe in it, fasten ourselves to it. And then we must prefer others to ourselves, and we must sustain a permanent tone of hopefulness and joy. Then we must be patient when troubles come. Then prayers—we must be instant in them; and there are charities and hospitalities—all must be well in hand, looked after, and ordered. And then our sympathies, they, too, must be noted and cherished, and kept alive, so that they may move easily out to share in whatever those about us are feeling, whether it be sorrow or joy. We must rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep. We must be instinctively ready for either. And then ambition must be curbed and unity must be fostered, and we must bend our interests down to the level of those who are of a very different type, perhaps of a lower class than ourselves, so as to see with their eyes and hear with their ears: 'Condescend to men of low estate.' So much for the Second Sunday. A heavy order that, indeed! But surely the Third Sunday has more to follow, especially in the management of our conduct towards our neighbours, crushing

out deceit and the instinct of retaliation, always taking care to do and say the thing which outsiders may recognise as honourable, making always in the direction of orderly and peaceful living. And yet on the Fourth Sunday there is a new departure: life taken in our relation to the government, to the law of the constituted state. A great deal of pains is to be taken with ourselves here, too. We have, S. Paul tells us, a distinct duty of submission and obedience wherever the state is acting according to its proper powers; for these proper powers, when not overstepped, are of God; and obedience to them, therefore, so far is not a mere moral act, but is a part of our direct duty to God Himself. We must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake; and this wide principle spreads out its application over all the variety of lawful demands which may be made upon our time or our purse or our attention, compelling us to render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom is due, power to whom power is due, honour to whom honour is due.

Nor have we yet reached the end of our task. On the Fifth Sunday the epistle will call us from these outward conformities of social life to the innermost grounds of our being, asking of us a long tale of spiritual virtues, mercies, and meekness and long-suffering, to bear with others, to forgive them even as Christ did, and that above all things we put on charity. And then we have to keep up, we are told, the cheerful heart, and to be ever thankful, and to have the peace of God keeping watch and ward over our souls; and we must be ready to teach each other, and sing with each other, making melody in our hearts unto the Lord; and all and everything in this long catalogue, whether it be in word or in deed, is still to be done in full recollection and recognition of the name of the Lord Jesus, 'giving thanks unto God the Father by Him.'

Now that is a serious and alarming business. How are we going to remember it all, and what a labour it will be? And why is it all discharged upon us in Epiphany?

I. Why are we drawn off from our contemplation of the mystery by this laborious course of practical self-discipline, and a good life? Let us begin by answering the last question first. The key is all given in the epistle for the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany, from which my text is taken: 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil.' 'Ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins.' 'When He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.' He was manifested to take away our sins. That is the form His manifestation is to take. The Epiphany is made manifest in our purified lives. His glory is to show itself through us. He houses this glory within the

body of His believers, and thence He shines out upon the world as through a lamp, and their goodness of life is the vehicle of illumination, the medium through which His light passes out to irradiate the surrounding darkness. That is the plain band that binds the epistles to the gospels. The epistles illustrate the issue and continuance of that which the gospels require. The very Christ, at whose feet the wise men of the East presented frankincense and myrrh, shall shine out now upon the intellectual thought of the world, through that renewed and transformed mind of those who have won the faculty to recognise what is the good and perfect and acceptable will of God. And again, that very Christ, who flashed His questions and His answers in upon the old students of God's Word in the Temple, still should spread His illuminative understanding upon the story of God's words through those in whom, according to the epistle, the Word of God has dwelt richly in all wisdom, in those who are able by it to teach and admonish each other, who have gifts of prophecy, of teaching, of exhortation. That very Christ, under whose sacred finger the white water flashed at Cana into marriage wine, should yet be felt in the midst of all our feasts, in the heart of all human gladness, through those whose sympathies, weak and unstable as water themselves, have all been elevated, fired, transmuted, by His Holy Spirit into that warm and open charity which is the crown and glory of all kindness, meekness, and long-suffering; in the mind of which they for ever rejoice, and give thanks in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their hearts unto the Lord. That very Christ, at whose touch the horror of leprosy fell away, at whose word the centurion's slave was healed, should still be known in His ancient power through those who in Him have bowels of mercy and long-suffering, who show mercy with cheerfulness, who weep with those that weep, who overcome evil with good. That very Christ, whom even the loud wind and boisterous sea obeyed, before whom the fierce violence of the legion of devils was paused, should even now be seen and known through those in whose breasts the storms and tumults of passion have ceased, and become a great calm, those whose wild and angry lusts have vanished utterly away, together with all foul and swinish memories, and have perished in the depths of the sea. Leave them there sitting at Jesus' feet, quiet, and clothed, and human, and possessed of their selves in peace. Here, in the good and pure life of believers, is Christ's continued Epiphany. This is the very end and aim of His manifestation—that He should destroy in us the works of the devil, and, by so destroying them, make visible and plain His appearance on the earth.

II. Those who have recognised that appearance cannot but be made like Him just so far as even now they can see Him a little as

He is. Those who look for His final appearance in full glory cannot but purify themselves even as He is pure; they live between the first and the second manifestations, under the pressure of a sight once seen of Christ come in the flesh, under the pressure of that sight which shall be seen hereafter when they will have to be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is. So they live, knowing that whoever abideth in Him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him or known Him. So they live. So the living Christ is made manifest in them. Christ shows forth His glory through them, and therefore in the presence of such saints, whose light is seen to belong to the glory of the Father, wise men will be seen still to bow down, lepers will be cleansed, tempests will cease, and devils be cast out, and on all sides men will be asking, 'What manner of man is this Christ, whom even men's storms and passions obey?'

III. Christ's Epiphany in the world, then, is bound up with this terrible intimacy of our moral fidelity to His commandments. It is because we have seen Him that we are summoned to this task of self-discipline. He was manifested to take away our sins. And so to-day in this Epiphany we see what we have to do—what is before us. Now is the time to recognise more definitely than before this task to which we are pledged, to face, more precisely and distinctly than ever before, our responsibilities.

Note them point by point, as the epistles direct. Examining ourselves, proving ourselves, going over the whole ground of moral conduct with accurate attention to details, and careful attention to each department of life separately—body, mind, and spirit—we will turn the light of Christ's Epiphany upon ourselves, upon our motives, upon our springs of action. For if we willingly acquiesce in one sin we have not seen or known Him who was manifested without sin. The bare thought of all that makes us shrink back sorely disheartened—disheartened by our shame and infirmity which have hindered us long, and still so miserably hinder the shining of His glory.

Perhaps we may pluck up courage a little by referring to one or two points. First, we have seen all this moral work of ours forms, we say, an Epiphany, a revelation, not of ourselves, not of our own virtue or resolution or good-will, but of Christ. It is He who is made manifest through us. We simply suffer Him to show Himself. That is our endless comfort, our one unfailing hope. If we were to depend upon our own moral resources for this immense labour, the case were, indeed, hopeless; we should not have the heart even to begin. But we have to remember that that is not so. Christ is the sole Source and Spring of all that will be done. He lives within, ready to emerge. Through you His light will break and manifest itself; He will lay hands on the material yielded to Him, and will

do all the work. Here in Him then, lodged within us, is our fount of virtue, He pushing out His own purity, His own obedience. The result will show how great and glorious is He who even in our weakness can show Himself so strong. It will be Christ's Epiphany, not ours.

And then this simplifies our own part in it. We stand appalled at the long, minute list of duties that are demanded of us, patient in tribulation, instant in prayer, given to hospitality one man towards another, not minding high things, but condescending to them of low estate, and so on. We get desperate; we wish for one thing at a time; but if what we have said be true, it is one thing every time that is really asked, and through all this bewildering variety of duties this one thing is ever and always cohesion with Christ. Each separate excellence, each single character and will, is the character and will of Christ. S. Paul is not handing us over a list of legal obligations; he is simply describing how and what the one spiritual character of Jesus Christ will show itself to be under every conceivable circumstance. That character is identical with itself, and will reveal its identity of type; and all the list, therefore, means one thing, that is, how Jesus Christ, under those conditions, would behave; and it is He who is going, through His Spirit, to create this behaviour in us, and our particular part in the business never varies, therefore, at all. It always, in every field of life, means cling to Christ, cling closely, yield yourselves more fully, take of Him, turn to Him, fly to Him. If you had but better hold of Him then He would come through you more richly, and would take up all these separate varied particulars, and turn them to account. Your duty, your effort, then, is absolutely simple—not to try to do everything at once, but try to do one thing always. Try and draw nearer to the Lord in prayer, in meditation, in aspiration, in desire. As S. Paul sums it up, whether we eat, or drink, or whatsoever we do—it all means one thing—do it all in Christ Jesus.

H. SCOTT HOLLAND.

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE.

The Love that Calls us Sons.

Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. 1 S. John iii. 1.

I. OTICE the love that is given.

We are called upon to come with our little vessels to measure the contents of the great ocean, to plumb with our short lines the infinite abyss, and not only to estimate the quantity but the quality of that love, which, in both respects, surpasses all our means of comparison and conception.

Properly speaking, we can do neither the one nor the other, for we have no line long enough to sound its depths, and no experience which will give us a standard with which to compare its quality But all that we can do, S. John would have us do,—that is, look and ever look at the working of that love till we form some not wholly inadequate idea of it.

We can no more 'behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us' than we can look with undimmed eyes right into the middle of the sun.

So we have to turn to the work of Christ, and especially to His death, if we would estimate the love of God. According to S. John's constant teaching, that is the great proof that God loves us. The most wonderful revelation to every heart of man, of the depths of that divine heart, lies in the gift of Jesus Christ.

In like manner we have to think, if we would estimate the 'manner of this love,' that through and in the great sacrifice of Jesus Christ there comes to us the gift of a divine life like His own. Perhaps it may be too great a refinement of interpretation; but it certainly does seem to me that that expression 'to bestow His love upon' us, is not altogether the same as 'to love us,' but that there is a greater depth in it. There may be some idea of that love itself being as it were infused into us, and not merely of its consequences or tokens being given to us; as S. Paul speaks of 'the love of God shed abroad in our hearts' by the Spirit which is given to us. At all events this communication of divine life, which is at bottom divine love—for God's life is God's love—is His great gift to men.

Be that as it may, these two are the great tokens, consequences and measures of God's love to us—the gift of Christ, and that which

is the sequel and outcome thereof, the gift of the Spirit which is breathed into Christian spirits. These two gifts, which are one gift, embrace all that the world needs. Christ for us and Christ in us must both be taken into account if you would estimate the manner of the love that God has bestowed upon us.

II. Look next at the sonship which is the purpose of His given love.

The end is not reached by God's making us men. Over and above that He has to send this great gift of His love, in order that the men whom He has made may become His sons. If you take the context here you will see very clearly that the writer draws a broad distinction between 'the sons of God' and 'the world' of men who do not comprehend them, and so far from being themselves sons, do not even know God's sons when they see them. And there is a deeper and solemner word still in the context. S. John thinks that men (within the range of light and revelation, at all events) are divided into two families—'the children of God and the children of the devil.' There *are* two families amongst men.

'To as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God.' Believing in Christ with loving trust produces, and doing righteousness and loving the brethren, as the result of that belief, prove the fact of sonship in its highest and its truest sense.

What is implied in that great word by which the Almighty gives us a name and a place as of sons and daughters? Clearly, first, a communicated life, therefore, second, a kindred nature which shall be 'pure as He is pure,' and, third, growth to full maturity.

III. Now, still further, let me ask you to look at the glad recognition of this sonship by the child's heart.

The clause is added in the Revised Version, 'and such we are.' As I said, it is a kind of 'aside,' in which S. John adds the Amen for himself and for his poor brothers and sisters, toiling and moiling obscure among the crowds of Ephesus, to the great truth. He asserts his and their glad consciousness of the reality of the fact of their sonship, which they know to be no empty title. He asserts, too, the present possession of that sonship, realising it as a fact, amid all the commonplace vulgarities and carking cares and petty aims of life's little day. 'Such we are' is the 'Here am I, Father,' of the child answering the Father's call, 'My Son.'

IV. We have here, finally, the loving and devout gaze upon this wonderful love. 'Behold,' at the beginning of my text is not the mere exclamation which you often find both in the Old and in the New Testaments, which is simply intended to emphasise the importance of what follows, but it is a distinct command to do the thing, to look, and ever to look, and to look again, and live in the habitual

and devout contemplation of that infinite and wondrous love of God.

We cannot keep that great sight before the eye of our minds without effort. You will have very resolutely to look away from something else, if, amid all the dazzling gauds of earth, you are to see the far-off lustre of that heavenly love. Just as timorous people in a thunderstorm will light a candle that they may not see the lightning, so many Christians have their hearts filled with the twinkling light of some miserable tapers of earthly care and pursuits, which, though they be dim and smoky, are bright enough to make it hard to see the silent depths of heaven, though it blaze with a myriad stars.

Do not let that brightness burn unnoticed while your eyes are fixed on the ground, like the gaze of men absorbed in gold-digging, while a glorious sunshine is flushing the Eastern sky. 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on you,' and beholding, you will become the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty.

A. MACLAREN.

The Spiritual Basis of Education.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God. 1 S. JOHN iii. 2.
Being by nature the children of wrath. EPHESIANS ii. 3.

I. 'CHILDREN of wrath' does not mean children who provoke wrath, but children who are in some sense themselves wrathful. What is this sense? In the Greek it is very plain; the word translated 'wrath' is the Greek word ὀργή, and it is only in its secondary sense that this word means wrath or anger. Its primary sense is that of natural impulse, passion, emotion, the human character or disposition on its purely sensuous or emotional side, and that is the most natural sense of the word here—'and we are by nature,' by inherited constitution, 'the children of impulse.' The Apostle's statement, in reality, comes to this: that by nature we are children of impulse, of emotion, of passion, governed by the things about us and the impressions they make on our senses. I am not unaware, of course, that the misleading interpretation of the text is a very largely accepted one, and has exerted a wide influence on methods of education. It is taught, of course, in the Westminster Confession, which declares that Adam and Eve became dead in sin and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body; that as they were the origin of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature descended to all their posterity—by ordinary generation; and that every sin, both original and actual, being the transgression of the righteous law of God, does in its own nature

bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God and the curse of the law, and so made subject to the death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal. But this appalling theory, that by our mere birth we incur the divine anger, and that apart from any voluntary wrong-doing we are under the divine curse, is not true. It is contrary to the spirit of Christ; it is contrary to the spirit of the apostles, S. Paul and S. John. I ask you to take, as furnishing the true statement of child-nature, the true basis of all right education, those words of S. John's 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God.'

II. We have here the ground of all true education. The acknowledgment of the divinity of the child heart, the presence of the Son of God in our little ones, this is surely a far safer foundation for moral training than that doctrine of infant depravity which some men find it possible to accept as true, in spite of the plain teaching by act and word of the Master Himself. For what are His own words? 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me; forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.' It is strange that any one can miss the inevitable logic here,—if depravity is the natural state of the child's heart, and of such is the Kingdom of Heaven, wherein does the Kingdom of Heaven differ from the kingdom of hell? Or, again, Jesus said, 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye can in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.' To receive a little child in the name of Christ is to receive it as a son of man, as a son of God. As a son of man the child of impulse and emotion and passion, liable, therefore, to be drawn aside into a life which is merely of the earth, earthy; but also as a son of God, the partaker of the Divine nature, of a life which is from above, distinguishing him from all other creatures, as far as we know, in God's universe as a being capable of progress and education.

III. Reverence for the good parts of the children, faith in the Divine life within them—this is the ground and basis of all true moral training. After all, it is only the old principle of the Church Catechism, where at the outset every child is told he is a member of Christ, a child of God, an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven. He is declared to be in a state of salvation, and he is bidden to give God thanks for it. Being in that state, and on that ground, he can resist the powers which will seek to draw him out of it. The world, the flesh, and the devil, he is told plainly, are fighting against him, and will fight against him to the end; but these powers shall not have dominion, for he is baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. He can look up to God when the evil spirit claims to be his master, and say, 'I believe in the Father Almighty.' When

the pomps and vanities of the world are bringing him into bondage he can say, 'I believe in Him who was born of the Virgin, and who was crucified, and who has overcome the world.' When the flesh is asserting its tyranny, and trying to stir him up to selfish thoughts and division, he can say, 'I believe in the Holy Spirit, who has brought me into a divine family, who promises to unite me and all its members in one communion, who gives me forgiveness and enables me to forgive, He will raise up my body and give me that life of which I have been declared the inheritor.'

Loyalty to Christ, personal, passionate; faith in the good hearts of the children, and faith in the Christ in them, the hope of glory—these are the two root principles of all right moral training. Take heed that ye despise not; take heed that ye offend not; take heed that ye hinder not one of these little ones—these are the three great educational laws of Jesus Christ, without which all the rest of our work must end in miserable failure.

Let us, at least, save Christianity for our children by bringing them into allegiance to Christ, the children's King. Do you ask me how? How did the old cavaliers bring up sons and daughters in passionate loyalty and reverence for not too worthy princes? Their own hearts were full of it; their lips spake it; their acts proclaimed it; the style of their clothes, the ring of their voices, the carriage of their heads, all was one proclamation of boundless devotion to their king and their cause. If an earthly prince could command such a measure of loyalty, what shall we say, with our children's eyes looking into ours, of the 'Chief among ten thousand and the Altogether Lovely'?

DEAN STUBBS.

The Unrevealed Future of the Sons of God.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. 1 S. JOHN iii. 2.

I. THE fact of sonship makes us quite sure of the future.

That is to say, he that here, in an infantile way, is stammering with his poor unskilled lips the name 'Abba! Father!' will one day come to speak it fully. He that dimly trusts, he that partially loves, he that can lift up his heart in some more or less unworthy prayer and aspiration after God, in all these emotions and exercises, has the great proof in himself that such emotions, such relationship, can never be put an end to. The roots have gone down through the temporal, and have laid hold of the eternal. Anything seems to be more credible than that a man who can look

up and say, 'My Father' shall be crushed by what befalls the mere outside of him; anything seems to me to be more believable than to suppose that the nature which is capable of these elevating emotions and aspirations of confidence and hope, which can know God and yearn after Him, and can love Him, is to be wiped out like a gnat by the finger of Death. The material has nothing to do with these feelings, and if I know myself, in however feeble and imperfect a degree, to be the son of God, I carry in the conviction the very pledge and seal of eternal life. That is a thought 'whose very sweetness yieldeth proof that it was born for immortality.' 'We are the sons of God,' therefore we shall always be so, in all worlds, and whatsoever may become of this poor wrappage in which the soul is shrouded.

We may notice, also, that not only the fact of our sonship avails to assure us of immortal life, but that also the very form which our religious experience takes points in the same direction.

As I said, infancy is the prophecy of maturity. 'The child is father of the man'; the bud foretells the flower. In the same way, the very imperfections of the Christian life, as it is seen here, argue the existence of another state, where all that is here in the germ shall be fully matured, and all that is here incomplete shall attain the perfection which alone will correspond to the power that works in us. Think of the ordinary Christian character. The beginning is there, and evidently no more than the beginning. As one looks at the crudity, the inconsistencies, the failings, the feebleness of the Christian life of others, or of one's-self, and then thinks that such a poor, imperfect exhibition is all that so divine a principle has been able to achieve in this world, one feels that there must be a region and a time where we shall be all which the transforming power of God's Spirit can make us.

II. Now I come to the second point, namely, that we remain ignorant of much in that future.

That happy assurance of the love of God resting upon me, and making me His child through Jesus Christ, does not dissipate all the darkness which lies on that beyond. 'We are the sons of God, and,' just because we are, 'it does not yet appear what we shall be.' Or, as the words are rendered in the Revised Version, 'it is not yet made manifest what we shall be.'

The meaning of that expression, 'It doth not yet appear,' or, 'It is not made manifest,' may be put into very plain words. S. John would simply say to us, 'There has never been set forth before men's eyes in this earthly life of ours an example, or an instance, of what the sons of God are to be in another state of being.' And so, because men have never had the instance before them, they do not know much about that state.

In some sense there has been a manifestation through the life of Jesus Christ. Christ has died; Christ is risen again. Christ has gone about amongst men upon earth after resurrection. Christ has been raised to the right hand of God, and sits there in the glory of the Father. So far it has been manifested what we shall be. But the risen Christ is not the glorified Christ. So that, while we thankfully recognise that Christ's Resurrection and Ascension have 'brought life and immortality to light,' we must remember that it is the fact, and not the manner of the fact, which they make plain; and that, even after His example, it has not been manifested what is the body of glory which He now wears, and therefore it has not yet been manifested what we shall be when we are fashioned after its likeness.

There has been no manifestation, then, to sense, or to human experience, of that future, and, therefore, there is next to no knowledge about it. You can only know facts when the facts are communicated. You may speculate, and argue, and guess as much as you like, but that does not thin the darkness one bit. The unborn child has no more faculty or opportunity for knowing what the life upon earth is like than man here, in the world, has for knowing that life beyond. The chrysalis's dreams about what it would be when it was a butterfly would be as reliable as a man's imagination of what a future life will be.

III. Our sonship flings one all-penetrating beam of light on that future, in the knowledge of our perfect vision and perfect likeness. 'We know that when He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.'

'When He shall be manifested'—to what period does that refer? It seems most natural to take the manifestation here as being the same as that spoken of only a verse or two before. 'And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He shall be manifested, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.' (ii. 28.) That 'coming,' then, is the 'manifestation' of Christ; and it is at the period of His coming in His glory that His servants 'shall be like Him, and see Him as He is.' Clearly then it is Christ whom we shall see and become like, and not the Father invisible.

To behold Christ will be the condition and the means of growing like Him. That way of transformation by beholding, or of assimilation by the power of loving contemplation, is the blessed way of ennobling character, which even here, and in human relationships, has often made it easy to put off old vices and to clothe the soul with unwonted grace. Men have learned to love and gaze upon some fair character, till some image of its beauty has passed into their ruder

natures. To love such and to look on them has been an education. The same process is exemplified in more sacred regions, when men here learn to love and look upon Christ by faith, and so become like Him, as the sun stamps a tiny copy of its blazing sphere on the eye that looks at it. But all these are but poor far-off hints and low preludes of the energy with which that blessed vision of the glorified Christ shall work on the happy hearts that behold Him, and of the completeness of the likeness to Him which will be printed in light upon their faces.

A. MACLAREN.

This Hope in Him.

And every one that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.
1 S. JOHN iii. 3.

I. 'EVERY one that hath this hope set on Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.' What is 'this hope'? In the first two verses of the chapter, S. John both tells us what it is and what it rests upon: 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God. . . . Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that when He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him even as He is.' 'We shall be like Him'—this is the hope; and it rests upon a present fact, the fact that 'now are we children of God;' and it leads to present action: 'Every one that hath this hope purifieth himself, even as He is pure.'

Our actual position at the present time is at once the result and the token of God's love. There is no doubt about the position which we hold, however we may neglect it or fail to live up to it; and it is God's love that has placed us in it. And so S. John reiterates the statement, saying (*v.* 2): 'Beloved, now are we the children of God.' There is nothing better than this for us here or afterwards, nothing we could accept in exchange for this. It is a blessed privilege, one we think too little of because it is so common, and yet one which makes all earthly honours pale before it.

II. 'We know that when He shall be manifested we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him even as He is.' 'We know;' there is no doubt of it. Here is an inspiring power. His glory we have not seen as it will be one day; there is a manifestation, eternal and glorious, yet to be made of Him, of which the manifestations already given are but types and shadows. And yet we have a link which binds us so closely to Him; the link of membership with Christ, of sonship to God, that 'we know we shall be like Him.' What He

will be we know not now! all that a likeness to His adorable Person will involve we cannot tell, but we do 'know that we shall be like Him,' and this is enough for us, to fill us with hope, and to fill us with shame.

'For we shall see Him as He is.' No one can be in that presence without being transformed and glorified; there will be no veil between, of ignorance or sin.

What I am to 'be!' Something far above what I am to 'have' of pleasure or of pain, of wealth or poverty! No wonder the thought of this, the hope of this, has power over me to draw me from evil and (in spite of all terrible temptations) to lead me towards heights of purity. This 'What I am' is a matter of the extremest importance to me; I may have plenty of money one day and be reduced to beggary the next, but I am 'myself' still. I may have plenty of food and clothes to-day, and to-morrow be dying of cold and hunger, but I am 'myself' all the time. It is the question of what this 'self' is that is the question of all questions, of what this 'self' is to be in the eternal world.

There is a future for me; a future of God's preparing. And if I do not come to it, I shall not come to anything at all that is worth having. What is this future? Full of sin to-day, 'The whole head sick, and the whole heart faint' (Isa. i. 5). And yet, one day cleansed, and renewed, and set free from sin in that land of which S. John tells us (Rev. xxi. 27): 'There shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie, but only they which are written in the Lamb's book of Life.' So far above anything in our experience! and yet God's end and ideal for us, the mark at which our lives are to aim, and, therefore, by God's mercy not out of reach of us! The best, the most saintly of those who have passed out of the mist into the sunlight, passed the river of death! whatever our love and reverence towards them, we could never say of them on earth so great a thing as this, that they were 'like God.' It is altogether an unearthly thing, *that* is, and we feel it so, even for them. And yet, now! we know not how far above they are already what they were here on earth, how much nearer to the Lord, how nearly come to what they 'shall be.'

What wonderful motives God our Father sets before us! 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God' (S. Matt. v. 8). And again, 'I will receive you, and will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God' (2 Cor. vi. 17—vii. 1). 'Every one that hath this hope set on Him.' Essentially unselfish is the Christian hope, as we have seen before.

It is a hope whose object is the Lord Himself; 'to gain Christ, and be found in Him' (Phil. iii. 8, 9); to draw near to and to be with and to grow like unto One who was lifted up from the earth, to draw all men unto Himself (S. John xii. 32); One who 'loved me, and gave Himself up for me' (Gal. ii. 20); it is a hope set on Him rather than what a man can get in heaven or avoid of punishment in hell.

'Every one that hath this hope set on Him purifieth himself.' You remember how in this same Epistle (i. 7) we are taught, 'The Blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin'; you remember also how the general teaching of Holy Scripture is summed up in our Church Catechism, 'Thirdly, I believe in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God.' But there is no contradiction of these truths here. It is indeed God the Holy Ghost who sanctifies us, cleanses us, purifies us by 'the Blood of Jesus His Son,' but we on our side have a part and a duty in this work of cleansing, 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work, for His good pleasure' (Phil. ii. 12, 13), and S. John sets the double truth before us, when he says (Rev. vii. 14), 'These are they which . . . have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.'

E. T. LEEKE.

Sin and its Consequences.

Sin is the transgression of the law. 1 S. John iii. 4.

I. EVERY wilful sin you commit is an act of direct dishonour to God (Rom. ii. 23). It is saying, 'God, I will not serve Thee.' Acting like wicked Pharaoh, 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?' (Exod. ii. 2.) You are simply *daring God* (Job xv. 25). Rejecting Christ. 'We will not have this Man to reign over us' (S. Luke xix. 14). 'Not this man, but Barabbas' (S. John xviii. 40).

II. Temptation is no excuse. Anybody could keep from sin if not tempted. Virtue, springing from love to God, consists in overcoming temptation. To say you *can't*, is to deny God's truth (1 Cor. x. 13; Heb. ii. 18), and is itself a great sin. No such word as 'can't' for a Christian.

God does not desert the sinner, it is the sinner who deserts God (S. John xiv. 23; Rev. iii. 20). Man, by wilful continuance in sin, is bidding God depart, and inviting the devil to take His place.

III. Why does God desire us not to sin? (1) For His own sake. He longs to have us near Him (Jer. xxxi. 3). (2) For our sakes, He longs that we should be happy—here—hereafter (Ezek. xviii. 4).

Here, for while the devil is the hardest Master (S. Luke viii. 29; ix. 39; 1 S. Pet. v. 8), whose services must bring misery (Deut. xxviii. 47, 48; Ps. ix. 16, 17), God's 'yoke is easy,' and His service, perfect freedom (S. Matt. xi. 30; 1 S. John v. 3). Hereafter, because it will bring to us happiness evermore (Rev. xxi. 4).

J. E. VAUX.

Six Manifestations of Christ.

The Son of God was manifested. 1 S. John iii. 8 (part).

WE are just passing away from the season of Epiphany. Before we lose sight of it altogether, perhaps it may be well to gather up and present at one view the general teaching of the season, so as to impress it more upon our minds. Our theme then, for this morning, shall be, the Epiphanies of the Lord Jesus Christ; and I will touch upon six of them as fully as my limits will allow.

I. Now, the word Epiphany means, as you know, 'manifestation,' or 'showing.' And the idea suggested by the word is this, that what had been held back, or concealed for a certain period, is, at the expiration of that period, produced or exhibited in such a way as to be brought within the reach of observation and scrutiny. We have an exemplification of the idea in the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Child, the centre of all prophecies from the beginning of time; the fulfilment of the hopes of the Jewish race; the desire of all nations, who were dimly and uncertainly groping after the light, the Divine Child lay there before the Shepherds; and they blessed God that their eyes had been permitted to behold the sight. This may be called the first Epiphany, the manifestation of Christ to His own covenant people, the people of Israel.

II. The manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles is another Epiphany. The first manifestation was to the Jews; the second, to the Gentiles. And the inference to be drawn is this, that He is equally the Saviour, and the King, and the Friend of both.

III. We shift the scene. Twelve years have passed away since the earliest Epiphany took place, and we are now in the Temple at Jerusalem.

If there were facts with which Jesus was not acquainted at one time, but became acquainted with at another, one of these facts might very well be the mystery of His relation to the unseen Father in heaven. And the moment, when we may believe the conviction of His divine Sonship to have flashed in upon Him, and taken possession of Him, was that of which the evangelist speaks in the second chapter of his gospel, when he describes the wondrous boy as saying

to His parents, 'How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?' *Then* it was, we believe, that Jesus came to know distinctly that He was the eternal Son of the eternal Father. And if so, we may rightly speak of this incident as 'the manifestation of Jesus Christ to Himself.'

IV. John the Baptist had drawn multitudes after him, by the energy of his preaching, to a place called Bethabara, or Bethany, and there he baptized them unto repentance, announcing, at the same time, that he was merely the forerunner of a far greater personage than himself, who should baptize with the Holy Ghost. Whilst he was thus engaged Jesus approached, offering Himself for baptism. In this incident we have what we may call the 'manifestation of Jesus to John the Baptist.'

V. Jesus has been invited, He and His disciples, to a marriage feast, in a little Galilean village, called Cana. The manifestation there wrought was what we may call the Epiphany of Christ in His wonder-working power to His followers and disciples.

VI. There is yet one more topic remaining to be considered. We have seen that there was a 'fulness of the time,' at which, when it had arrived, God sent forth His Son into the world. Now Christ, who came to us, hath gone away from us. He has withdrawn into the heavens. 'They have received Him until the restitution of all things,' and we are looking for another 'fulness of time' to arrive, when He shall again appear for the deliverance of His people. It is this appearing which S. Paul calls the manifestation of the sons of God.

G. CALTHROP.

Why Christ Came.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. 1 S. JOHN iii. 8.

S. JOHN is, in a peculiar sense, the Apostle of the Church's latter day. The Book of Revelation alone would make him so. Less obviously, but quite as really, the gospel and the epistles make him so. It is as though he had pierced the screen of time, and placed himself in the very midst of those actual conflicts and agitations of thought and opinion, through which we, my brethren, have to make our way, slowly and sorrowfully, toward the rest and the inheritance which remains in heaven for the people of God.

Epiphany and Advent have much in common. The one is the 'Appearing,' and the other is the 'Coming.' Both are used in Scripture for the first visit of Christ to the earth, and for the second.

And though, as Church seasons, they are wide apart, it seems as if the Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany was made to breathe as much as possible the spirit of the Advent season. 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.'

I. We are carried here into the very heart of the gospel. We are told why Christ came—why there is a gospel. And that purpose which has different expressions in Scripture, even in this one epistle, is here stated in the most direct and practical form. So practical, that I can imagine some one saying: 'Yes, that is my view; what we have to look at is the morality of the gospel. We read here that its object is to destroy the works of the devil—which is, I suppose, a Hebrew form of words for sin; and thus the amount of it all is, that the one aim of the gospel is to teach men to lead moral lives.'

In this tone you hear men speak of Christian morals as higher and purer than those of other religions or other philosophies. They are Christians, according to their idea of that phrase, because they admire the Sermon on the Mount, and (with many drawbacks) the general tone of Scripture, in its enforcement of relative and personal duties. When you press them, you find that their idea of a Revelation, whatever its topic, is merely that of the exercise of reason and conscience upon subjects falling wholly within their province. That God spake, either by Moses or by Christ, in the way of direct message or inspiration, is not in their thoughts; and if their view of the result were the true one, we should agree with them as to the authorship.

The text does bear on its surface an enforcement of morality. It does imply that Christ's real battle is with sin. It does bid us, if we are Christians, to fight it out with our sins. It does say that the gospel is a failure so far as it leaves a man in his sins. It does earnestly, solemnly rebuke the man who thinks more of orthodox doctrine than of a holy life—turning away from his work or from the spiritual battle within him to cast a stone at some holy, devoted brother who cannot see or cannot say precisely as he does concerning the Christian, but who is evidently, quite unmistakably, fighting under Christ's banner against sin, the world, and the devil.

But although the gospel may thus appeal, and successfully, to the natural judgment on the general ground of its antagonism to moral evil, it will never satisfy even the conscience, even the reason, of men if it stops there. Other systems have made proper distinctions between vice and virtue. Other systems have anticipated much of what the gospel has to say concerning duty, whether personal or relative. This is not the point of difference, though it may be a point of advantage, on the side of the gospel. The thing wanted

was—conscience knows it—a specific medicine for a specific disease; a divine intervention to repair a breach and a ruin: a supernatural remedy for an unnatural condition.

And thus a text which seemed at first sight, and continues to be a tribute to the morality, to the holiness, of the gospel, becomes also, on closer examination, a revelation of that 'ministry of the supernatural in cure of the unnatural' which the conscience instinctively recognises as worthy of the God who made her and who speaks in her.

II. 'That He might destroy the works of the devil.' What have we here? Not, surely, a mere Orientalism for moral evil. Not, surely, a chance or a cant phrase for which a mere abstraction might be substituted at pleasure. Rather a glimpse, faint yet true, of a wreck and a chaos utterly unnatural; of a power alien and hostile, which has entered and defiled and desolated a portion of God's handywork: something which is not a mere spot or stain or disfigurement, but has an influence and an action real and definite; a power which 'works'—works (for that is the thing spoken of) in the hearts and lives and souls of men, and which can only cease to work by being (it is here said) 'destroyed.' Will any one call this natural? Will any one dare to say that this usurper is our rightful lord—that it is according to nature that we are thus? He only who can thus dream—he only who can do this greatest affront to the Majesty of heaven, to suppose that God made man evil—has any right to declare against the possibility of supernatural grace, in counteracting, in vanquishing, in destroying, this certainly unnatural evil.

III. And 'for this purpose the Son of God was manifested.' He who, as S. John tells us in the first verse of his gospel, 'was in the beginning, and was with God, and was God,' was, in the fulness of time, 'manifested'—the veil of the divine secrecy was taken off from Him—'the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory.'

'If the Fall'—one has written—'is a fearful tragedy, reparation must be more than an idyll.' The man who makes light of Calvary, the man who rests in Deism, the man who thinks ethics enough, and rather compliments the gospel upon its morality than receives even that morality as a revelation—such a man, depend upon it, is a man of either darkened or else unawakened conscience. Either 'hardened through the deceitfulness of sin,' and therefore glad to make light of it—glad to believe that a slight remedy is sufficient for a slight indisposition, and that a wish, a sigh, a tear, the mere lapse of a year or two, will easily cancel and obliterate the handwriting that is against him: or else—and is not this fault enough?—unaware, for lack of temptation, for lack of having had the innermost depth of all stirred

into self-reproach, unaware of 'the plague of his own heart.' When that discovery comes, then, and not before, he will be a competent judge. It will come—may it be in time! It will come—if never before, then in front of the great white throne. Then will he see as he is seen—know as he is known. Then there will be a revelation within of the necessity, of the beauty, of the adaptation and congruity of a gospel of grace. Then will the words flash upon him with a dazzling lustre—'He manifested forth His glory—and His disciples believed on Him.' DEAN VAUGHAN.

The Personality and Defeat of the Devil.

The devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. 1 S. JOHN iii. 8.

A LITTLE above, S. John had assigned another end to the manifestation of Christ. 'Ye know,' says he in the fifth verse, 'that He was manifested to take away our sins.' This, however, though to us all-important, was a subordinate end of His manifestation. The eagle eye of the Apostle of love travels on to an ulterior end lying yet further back in the horizon of the divine purpose. The taking away of sins has reference to the original instrumentality by which this ruin was incurred—reference, in short, to a scene behind and beyond that of man. 'The devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.'

This is the main aspect of our blessed Lord's manifestation in human flesh. He came as a personal Champion to encounter upon the arena of the earth, and finally to overthrow, a personal tyrant. The earliest prediction of Him—the prediction which dates from the beginning of human history—ran thus, 'The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.' The ultimate object, this, of the seed of the woman; and accordingly you will read the narrative of our blessed Lord's life, given by the evangelists, in a wrong light if you keep in sight exclusively the relief and deliverance wrought out for ourselves thereby, if you fail to recognise all through a personal struggle with the devil, ending in a complete and glorious triumph by means of that very event, the death of Christ, which seemed to give the devil the advantage.

I. The first thought which arises from our text is this, that the personality of the devil in which so many professing Christians secretly disbelieve—(did I say 'secretly disbelieve'? I am afraid I might say 'avowedly disbelieve'): I say the personality of the devil

is a doctrine essential to the scheme of human redemption. Indeed, this scheme, as revealed in the Bible, is like some arch, if such an arch could be built, in which every stone is a keystone. If you remove one member of the scheme, the whole falls to pieces and becomes a heap of confusion. To suppose, as many do, that the Scriptural terms 'Satan' and 'the devil' stand, not for a real, living agent, but for the great complex of evil influences within us and around us, may seem at first sight very reasonable. Nay, it may appear possible to accommodate, or rather to strain, certain isolated passages of the Bible into a reluctant accordance with this view. But how does the matter look when we fairly and honestly survey the whole plan of the life of Christ, and see how this antagonistic relation to the devil runs through every part of the plan? The devil foiled in the temptation; the devil ejected from the demoniacs; the devil, like the mythological Vulcan, hurled down from the seat of his power; the devil sifting the college of the Apostles and robbing it of one of its members; the devil wrestling with Christ in His agony; the devil instigating His death and afterwards completely overthrown by it; the special commission to the Apostles to cast out the devil—what shall we say to these things if, in real truth, there is no such personal agent as the devil? We must say that by such a supposition you rob the entire scheme of its significance, and destroy its most fundamental relations. Nay, we must say more than this: we must say that by such a supposition you make a very large stride in the direction of modern scepticism, and pay a considerable instalment of the demand made by the infidel. The theory of probably the worst and most pestilent German rationalist who has yet appeared is that the Lord Jesus Himself never had any real existence—that He is a fictitious mythological character—the representation of perfect human virtue.

II. Notice next how intimately bound up with the scheme of human redemption is the personality of the tempter, while at the same time it will be seen that even this doctrine, so frightful in one aspect of it, is yet, in another point of view, eminently consolatory. Consider, then, the simple Scriptural statement of the Fall of man, as it is revealed to us in the Book of Genesis, and of the divine judgment pronounced upon the various parties engaged in it.

Without denying that there are difficulties in this narrative, are not the great features of the story perfectly simple if we will but accept them simply? We know, alas, only too well—it is matter of every-day experience—that men act as tempters to one another. What difficulty is there in the hypothesis that an evil angel in disguise might act as a tempter to a man? We know that when such seduction is practised among ourselves our whole indignation is

roused against the seducer, while his victim is regarded more in sorrow and compassion than in anger.

But now, suppose for one moment that we deny the personal agency of the tempter, and understand Satan as an allegory for the abundant evil which is in man. If this evil which is in man was self-originated, if it was bred in him, I do not see, for my part, that it is separable from him. If the mischief began with himself, if it was in no sense his misfortune, if he was not the weak victim of an evil power, but the defiant antagonist of God, set on by his own wicked mind, I am unable, in that case, to conceive of a redemption for him. It is precisely because this evil was introduced into his nature from without—precisely because it had no place in him originally—that we believe him to be capable of recovery. Yes, a conqueror for the devil, one who shall simply trample him under foot, because the devil, having planned this evil in the counsel of his own mind, having 'sinned,' as you have it in the text, 'from the beginning,' and having fallen by an open-eyed voluntary antagonism to God, is not a subject for restoration, but only for defeat. But for man who, originally upright, was lured by deceit into the devil's toils—for man, to whom sin is still an Egyptian tyranny, under which he painfully groans, however much he may love certain degrading pleasures incidental to it—for man who at his worst is half-hearted, vacillating, and constrained in his allegiance to evil—for man who has yet the relics of a better mind, some susceptibility to God's terrors, and still more to God's love—for man, a lost sheep fallen into the pit of ruin, and piteously bleating there, moving by those feeble cries the Fatherly compassion of his Creator—give us no conqueror to tread him under foot, but a good and almighty Shepherd to reach down His arm into the pit and place the poor sheep upon His shoulders and bring him back to the fold rejoicing! DEAN GOULBURN.

The Victory of Christ.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 1 S. JOHN iii. 8.

I. IT is eighteen hundred years and more since the Son of God was manifested: can we say that He has destroyed the works of the devil? Let us look around and answer for ourselves. We read the journals of the day, and what do we see there? Every page is full of gloomy stories of vice; every page is stained and blotted with some tale of murder and violence. The midnight thief plies his trade with ever-increasing energy and success. The commercial world is shaken by gigantic swindles, its honesty undermined by

every form of secret trickery. We take up a work of fiction, or one of the so-called society journals, and what do we find? We find a picture of life so hollow, so unreal, so vicious, that we are half inclined to believe it is the mere creation of the writer's fancy. We can scarcely believe that in our own country, in the midst of ourselves, such a form of society should be found, and found even in what we speak of as the higher circles of our English life. And what shall be said of the social arrangements of our home life; of the appalling width of the line which severs rich and poor; of the heart-rending condition, the disclosure of which is now filling the world, of the life and homes of our city poor? We look around, I say, and see these things, and we cannot but ask ourselves whether these are not, indeed the devil's work? whether the manifestation of the Son of God has done the work that it professed to do; whether eighteen centuries of Christianity have not produced a dismal failure?

II. However we regard the manifestation of the Son of God, it seems to lead us away from self. In its simplest form it would appear to be an authoritative declaration that God and man are one. We are told in it to look for an interpretation suited to our minds of the incomprehensible God. We lift our eyes to behold the explanation, and behold it is a *Man*. It is, then, a declaration of what in other respects we may dimly feel, rendered, as far as we are concerned, unquestionable; a declaration of the great fact that the world is full of the Spirit of God, and that in us in some special manner that Spirit has taken up its residence. Every increase of thought, and knowledge, and science, brings us nearer to the belief, which, I suppose, is gradually assuming its place among our fixed opinions, that the universe is the great exposition of the thought and power of God. To us, as far as the human race is concerned, the manifestation of Christ has made that belief a certainty. The typical Man, Christ, declares the common sonship with Himself of man, a connection so close as to become a unity of man with God. And with the declaration went an example. To the eyes of all was shown in the life of that typical Man, an illustration of what man, thus one with God, should do, and what life he should live. And one keynote runs constantly recurring through that life; it is self-denial, self-abnegation, sacrifice; the absolute resignation of all, of thought, of peace, of life, nay, even—for what is the meaning of the despairing cry upon the cross?—even of the sense of communion with His Father for the sake of the human race.

If this be the meaning of the manifestation it should lead us in two directions, and both of them, as I have said, away from self. On the one side is the overwhelming feeling of personal connection with God. The necessary accompaniments of that feeling, the outcome of

that highest form of moral self-respect it inevitably engenders, are purity of life, and the conscious obligation that being one with God we must pursue God's work. On the other side, there is the yet more overwhelming feeling that not we alone but every member of the human race is one with God too, that all are bound together in the same union; and that the work of God of necessity implies devotion to the cause of that brotherhood consisting wholly of fellow sons of God. And if these principles are not enough, then there remains the example, which tells us in words more readable than a principle may be, that for the sake of the good of that brotherhood no sacrifice can be too great, no self-effacement too complete.

It surely does not seem here that the salvation of the individual soul is the prominent point emphasised by that manifestation. It may, nay, it inevitably must, spring from it incidentally, for in its truest sense union with God *is* salvation. The acceptance of the position of God's Son, is the acceptance of salvation. But from the moment that this act of acceptance is completed, the object is no longer to secure salvation, the object becomes, on the one hand, to draw nearer to the God to whom we are joined, to render more true and real the union we have accepted; and as the outcome of it, on the other hand, the devotion of all we have, and all we are to the perfection of God's work in man.

May there not be fair ground for saying that the chief motive for the action of the Christian Church has during its past history been, and continues up to this very time largely to be, a fragment only of the real essential motive supplied by Christ's manifestation; and that it is because of this, because it has based its action on a half truth only, that we see around us an apparent failure, that the works of evil remain so fully among us?

III. The air is full just now of the gravest of social questions—questions so grave, as some think, as to involve a complete reconstruction of society. If what I have been saying is at all true, our attitude with regard to those questions is clear. They must cease to be class questions, they must cease to be party questions. They must no longer serve as mere watchwords in political strife. They are questions of the deepest religious importance; they must be approached by us Christians on the side of Christianity and in the spirit of Christianity, which is the spirit of absolute sacrifice. They must then be treated with the most profound earnestness. They are not easy questions to solve. It is highly improbable that perfect truth lies on either side of them, and the first sacrifice we must make to them is that of the best efforts of our intellect and thought. It is not, especially for us to whom the gift of education is given, to be carried away by the first burst of sentiment or rhetoric. Careful

intellectual work, the best we have, we are bound to devote to them. More than this, for intellectual work will not always solve them, our duty is to try practical work as well. Let us confess, even while we uphold the vast differences between man and man, that we recognise in the gifts of wealth or refinement or education we possess, nothing but a charge placed in our trust, that if we preserve them, we preserve them only, not because we have any shadow of right to them, but because they can thus be best employed for the good of men. It may be that we shall arrive at an opposite conclusion. If so, let us treat it in the same Christian spirit. If for the happiness of man, our wealth, or our comfort, or our luxuries, or our prejudices must go, well! let them go. Let us offer them willingly for the sake of man, for the sake of Christ. 'If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.'

F. BRIGHT.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL.

Christian Union.

Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.
S. MATTHEW xxiv. 28.

THIS seems to have been a proverbial expression of a great rule in the divine Providence. This is the economy of heaven. This is the way of God. When evil and division have dissolved the life of a society, its outer form shall be destroyed too. When the soul has gone out of the body, the body must be put out of the way.

Our Lord speaks here of the dissolution of the Jewish polity. All the dread apparatus of judgment is described: the coming nearer and nearer of the storm, the signs in heaven and earth, the pest, the earthquake, the famine, which, like nature's prophetic sympathy with her children's coming ruin, have often been observed by the students of history to cast, as it were, the giant shadows of some great distress on the foreground of the world.

Whether it is that after a great calamity observers look with unusual minuteness at phenomena which have preceded the final stroke; or whether, in the painful lull, the hot feverish hour that comes before the storm, you are more disposed to attach a meaning to

signs which at other times would have been unnoticed, as the sound of a driven leaf, or the shape of a cloud appals the uneasy conscience which seems to oppress the very heavens and the earth with its weight of woe, and to make the heaven all eye and the earth all ear! Or whether, far above all second causes, the grand First Cause has so closely interlaced the powers of nature with the destinies of man—its life with its life, its earth to his earth—that his secret derangement and coming ruin show themselves by necessity on nature as on a dial-plate. However it be, we know not, but the fact we know, that when the end of an age has come—the fall of an ancient empire, the ruin of an old Jerusalem, the inroad of northern nations into Rome—there have been signs, and throes, and diseases, and a vague sense of uneasiness, and men's hearts failing them for fear. Always nature has shown her sympathy of joy or sorrow with her children. When the Babe was born in Bethlehem, a star hung like a handmaid lamp over her sleeping Lord; and when the Roman narrowed his compassing lines about ancient Zion, the very sun seemed turned into blood.

I. The decay of a society, of a nation, shows itself in the constant tendency to division. When one part separates itself from another part, one member holds itself aloof from another—this is in the community what dissolution is in the body.

We must make a distinction between the fact of divisions in a community, and there being a propensity to division; between divisions which are the signs of health, and divisions which are the signs of a breaking up of the system. There are divisions which are not only consistent with social life, but essential to it. There are intellectual divisions, differences of opinion on matters of the greatest import; parties formed to carry forward interests to which other parties are opposed. There are political and religious divisions, which show rather a healthy principle of mental and moral activity than a tendency to corruption. Investigation, research—conscientious, painstaking research on religious subjects, will often lead men to different conclusions. Education, association, social position, will exercise an influence on the individual, as well as the peculiar character of his mind; his bias, his tendency to study one subject; and the leaning of another equally conscientious thinker to overlook points to which he attaches value, will constitute two members of opposite political parties or of different religious sects.

It is when division comes from the flesh, not from the spirit—from passion, not from principle—from mutual hatred, not from mutual love—that it indicates corruption. 'What!' you exclaim, 'division come from mutual love?' All true, healthy division originates in the deepest love. If you were careless of your neighbour's interests,

you would let him go on in error to the end. It is anxiety which makes us cease to flatter and begin to differ—preferring his anger to his ruin. If you have real respect for any man's judgment, you will contradict him if your convictions differ from his. Look at political divisions: so long as they are carried on with honourable feelings and a common loyalty to the crown, are they not rather conducive to our national welfare than otherwise? So long as division in Church or State, in the family, or in science and literature, is grounded on loyalty to truth and conscience, so long it is like the manifold and divers tongues of Pentecost, like the divided flames that sat on the heads of Apostles—the sign of the presence of *One* Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.

II. What we have greatly and prayerfully to guard against in our country is the growth of what the Apostle would call *carnal* dispositions in the divisions which are the almost necessary result of unrestricted inquiry. Let the ground of difference be never so small, yet let it be a matter of conscience, of truth, and it will do good; but if it arise from pride or vain-glory, from rivalry or contention, it is carnal, and degrades its authors and abettors into hot and contemptible partisans. This is the difference in Parliament between a party and a faction. A party is respected, a faction despised. The opposition of a party is to measures, of a faction to men. The strength of a party is its principles; the strength of a faction is spite and rivalry. Parties may respect each other, factions must hate one another. This was the ruin of Athens; this was the ruin of the Roman Republic.

What can be done to suppress the spirit of religious alienation? what can be done to keep the members of the body from holding aloof from one another? ought to be the grand question with us in this our day. How to cherish the freest inquiry, and, at the same time, to unite the inquirers, is the great problem given us to solve. We must give every man his rights, and yet claim him as a brother.

The kind of union with which we are now contented would not, though improved a hundredfold, do the good which true union is adapted to do as promised by our Lord: 'That the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.' We should never allow ourselves to think of union without connecting with the subject these words of our Lord—these deep and blessed words—which go deeper into the matter than they suppose who quote only one half of what He says. 'That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.' These are words surely to make a man pause. You feel at once that you are going down into the great deep of things, when you earnestly try to get hold of our Lord's

meaning. Are we not led to conclude that this 'consummation devoutly to be wished,' 'that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me,' is to be the result of a far deeper kind of union than we have encouraged each other to cherish or support? Are we not to conclude that, till the kind of union here described *is* reached, we shall look in vain for this grand conclusion? It is not described by our Lord as accomplished by preaching of the word or by prayer, but by union of an unfathomable depth of reality—by a oneness which enters into the very source of being—into the very heart and soul of that union between the Father and the Son which is the ground of all dealings, the soul of all covenants between God and man: 'That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.'

III. And now let us suppose this deep, divine union of which we speak to become general among Christians, and we can, without going much into particulars, conclude to what practical measures it would lead us all. It would certainly lead to a manifested union, as the deep unity of life in the root of nature is visible in the growth and verdure of all things, great and small, 'from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop which groweth on the wall.' All life rooted in God comes up and flourishes before men, who, be they ever so careless, must see the difference between the plant which has life and the stone which has none. There would still be infinite diversity, as in nature; there would be discussion and inquiry, but it would be like the shaking of trees of righteousness when the breath of heaven stirs, or the storm bends their heads only to root them more firmly, only to make them grasp, as with living talons, the 'sure and firm-set earth.'

Let us leave the developments of such a union to the counsels of heaven; let us only be careful to possess that earnest and deep spiritual fellowship with God, without which we are unfit for any kind of union whatever. Let each man have the witness in himself, that he is born of God. Let each one put away the accursed thing which keeps him from being one with himself; which turns his life into confusion, his religion into a weariness, his God into a wilderness to him.

B. KENT.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS.

The Talebearer.

A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter. PROVERBS xi. 13.

I. TALEBEARER. One celebrated nation of antiquity used to express this man's character by a very significant figure. They called a talebearer a 'seed-picker.' They gave him the same name which they used for a bird which goes about everywhere picking up seeds. The poor bird does it for its own support and for that of its young. I wish we could say as much for the talebearer. And yet it is no exaggeration to say that there are men in the world who live by their seed-collecting; by going about here and there, from house to house, from street to street, through a town large or small, and gathering together all the little stories which can be told or made about the neighbours who are dwelling all the time securely by them, and ignorant of the calumnies by which they are assailed.

Yes, the 'seed-collector,' the man who goes about gathering anecdotes, great and small, about his neighbours, and retailing them again as he goes, is a common character everywhere. I wish that I could hold up the mirror to him for his own conviction. I am sure he would be ashamed, I believe he would be sorry, if he saw himself faithfully portrayed. If we endeavour to do so, it is for his good, with a view to making him a better man, with a view to showing him a more excellent way, with a view to bringing him to the cross for forgiveness, and the Spirit of Christ for cleansing. It may be that the giving up of one fault will be in God's hand the very saving of his soul.

A talebearer revealeth secrets. Things which have been confided to him, too often: things which a misplaced trust has put into his possession: things which a conscience ill at ease has deposited with him for its own relief: these things are sometimes betrayed by those who should have known better. Or else things which ought to be secrets: things which, even if true, are better not repeated: things the repetition of which can do no good either to religion or morality: things which it is a shame even to speak of, and which are only done, if done at all, in secret. Or else things which really are secrets;

secrets even to the person who repeats them, inasmuch as they are mere guesses, chance shots, arrows winged at a venture, assertions founded on a mere imagination. Yes, all these are examples of what we may understand by 'secrets' here.

Many motives go to make up a talebearer. His character is not so odious, apparently, in its beginnings. Perhaps he is a witty man. He has what is called a turn for satire. His insinuations have much point in them. He can intimate, rather than express, a scandal. His representations of character are pungent. His imitations, his caricatures, of manner and of speech, are irresistibly comic. In society he is the life of his company. You scarcely think, and he scarcely thinks, of the effect he is producing upon the good name of others. It is not till he is silent and departed—perhaps not even then—that you begin to feel that there has been virtually a talebearer among you, and that he has been revealing unkind secrets.

II. As we have been compelled to dwell for a time on the dark side of the picture, so now let us turn it in our hand and view that which is brighter and more attractive: as we have sought to express to ourselves the character of the talebearer who revealeth secrets, so now let us think of his opposite: 'he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.'

The matter. He does not say what matter. But we may understand it to include two things: that which has been intrusted to him in the secrecy of confidence, and that which has become known to him to another's disparagement.

We all think ill, or at least slightingly, of one who cannot keep a secret. There are such persons. There are those whom the possession of a secret frets and irritates beyond endurance. They can only relieve themselves by telling it. Such persons do much mischief. They do mischief sometimes by what they actually divulge. It is hard upon those who have trusted them, that they should be betrayed. Perhaps it is their fault for making a bad choice of their confidant. But the mischief goes further. It shakes men's confidence in confidence. People are afraid to trust any one. It has become so much a matter of experience that confidences are betrayed, that we are obliged to keep to ourselves secrets which it would be not only a great relief but a great blessing to us to be able to confide to another. There are ways, we all know, of violating confidence without actual treachery. Sometimes we hint a secret which we do not tell out. Sometimes we take just one other person into our confidence; tell him our friend's secret; and can we wonder if he in his turn tells it to just one other? We ought, for the sake of the general good, as well as for the sake of guarding against individual injury, to practise ourselves in keeping secrets. 'He that

is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.' We may dislike, we may discourage, as a general rule we may refuse, confidences: happy is he who is the depository of none: but, if a confidence is accepted, if it is even forced upon us, then let it be sacred. Nothing can excuse its violation. Difficult as it may sometimes be to reconcile it with speaking truth, to guard our brother's secret without sullying our own conscience with falsehood, this is just one of the many difficulties of life—this adjustment of apparently conflicting duties to our neighbour and to God—and we must pray for His help in surmounting it. He that is of a faithful spirit concealeth certainly the matter which has been intrusted to him.

How peaceable should we be, if there were no talebearers amongst us; but, let me rather say—for it is the more profitable and the more Christian way of expressing it—if there were not within each of our hearts so much of the spirit of the talebearer! It is the crying sin of social life. We cannot meet for half an hour's friendly converse without taking away one or two characters. Of us, in reference to speech at least, the words of the wise man are too true: 'They sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.' God give us all a better wisdom! Let us store our minds with things valuable, and meet one another to give out what we have first taken in. Let us talk less of persons. Constituted as fallen nature is, if we speak of persons, we shall be sure to speak ill of persons. If we must talk so much of persons, let us practise ourselves in speaking well of them. Let us see their good side when we can: and, when we cannot but see the evil, then let us go on our way and be silent about it. Above all —for here lies the root of almost every Christian grace—let us know ourselves a little better. Let us enter into judgment with our own hearts, and compare our own lives, outward and inward, with the standard of God's will and of Christ's example. I believe that, if we did this more, we should have little heart for scandal or for slander. We should be stopped, as by an audible voice within, when we were opening our lips to censure or to malign. It is the want of self-knowledge which makes us so keensighted. It is the want of acquaintance with Christ, as our propitiation first, and then as our example, which makes it possible for us to sit in the tribunal of judgment.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

Scattering and Yet Increasing.

There is that scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. PROVERBS xi. 24.

OUR Lord has told us that the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light—wiser, that is to say, not actually, but relatively, wiser in their generation, wiser for the purposes of that choice that they have made as children of this world, in which they prefer this world to the next; wiser than the children of light are as regards their choice, which is the preference of the next world to this. Unwise, supremely unwise, as their choice is who prefer the perishable to the imperishable, the temporal to the eternal, yet, setting aside the unwisdom of the choice, they are practically sagacious as to the selection of the means, and the children of light are not so. Our Lord then, you see, in these words, is setting the world, in this respect, as an example to the Church to be studied and followed; He tells us in effect this: 'Be you in the management of those affairs of My kingdom that I have intrusted to you until I come to reckon with you, be you as wise, as resolute, as practically sagacious as are the children of the world in attaining their false aim and their false choice, and you will succeed; if you are not, you will fail.'

Now it is this advice of our Lord's, of what we may call without irreverence practical and business-like wisdom in the affairs of His kingdom, it is this advice of our Lord's to His Church, that I ask you to consider in reference to one great department of the Church's work, her missionary work, for Christ. That this is her work and her great work for Christ there is no need for me to prove. The Church, at any rate, now recognises that to be her cause, and her Master's cause. It no longer needs argument to induce her to admit that He stamped upon her the very law of her life and being when He said to her, 'Go ye into all the world, and make disciples of every nation: and lo! I am with you even to the end of the world.'

We are not here to sacrifice to our nets and burn incense to our boats; we are here not so much to praise our nets as to mend them, and then at the command of our Lord and Master to launch out into the deep for another draught.

I. Now these two branches of inquiry are pressing themselves on such an occasion as this: the progress and methods of missionary work abroad, and the maintenance of it at home. Surely it is the latter which should most naturally and profitably occupy us. As regards the former, surely we at home should be rather learners than teachers. The missionaries as they come back from the mission field

tell us of their improved methods, or their greater progress, or their partial failure, and the reason for the one and for the other. But we, when we have listened to them, have another question to ask ourselves. They tell us much, very much, that is encouraging, and somewhat that is disheartening. They tell us, for instance, of great regions of the world, that were long ago closed not only to the missionary, but to the European, now thrown open to the message of the gospel. They tell us how at last the Church has regained one of the greatest of her old methods—that she goes out fully equipped for her work, and that the leader is also to be the ruler of the Church, and not coming perpetually afterwards to enter into other men's labours. They tell us another secret they have discovered, and that is, that it is a sad waste of time and strength to send out the solitary missionary, who, by the time that he has learned the language and the customs of those he would convert, becomes a broken-down and worn-out man, and must return again home; and that the wise, and safe, and successful course is to send out the Missionary Brotherhood, that never waxes old and never dies. They tell us of hindrances of one kind or another, and we grieve over them with them; and when we have put all these things together, and summed them up in the true old words—true now as ever, 'A great door is open,' and 'The harvest is plenteous and the labourers are few'—when we hear of this from them, they say to us: 'Our cause needs, above all things, men; send out into this whitening field man after man as speedily as you can do so.' We want not wealth, ease, and comfort, but every missionary that goes out, every bishop that charges himself with a new and distant diocese, says to us, 'Send us men.' Are we doing this in any measure that is duly proportionate to the demand and to our power to satisfy it? Does the contribution of English Christendom to missionary work constitute even an appreciable fraction of the wealth of English Christianity? And, if it does not, and if with shame we must confess that it does not, then surely here is an occasion and a place to ask ourselves, Why does it not? Why is it that English Christendom, to which God seems to have given in these latter days 'the heathen for an inheritance and the very uttermost parts of the earth for a possession'—why is it that she lags behind her great opportunities? Why is it she fails to rise up and gird herself to the task that her Lord has set before her?

Let us give a thought or two then to the question, as to whether the Church really loses or gains in respect of her home work by what she sends abroad to mission work; whether in this case the words of the text are not true, that there may be 'that scattereth and yet increaseth,' and that there may be 'that withholdeth more than is meet, and yet it tendeth to poverty.'

II. And let us take this in its simplest form,—in the first place, as it affects the individual soul, and as regards his work for the salvation of his own soul. There are Christians, and not a few, whose whole thought is absorbed in the salvation of their own souls. Their thought of the mission of Christ is just this: 'Christ has come into the world to save me; let me come to Christ and abide in Him, and I shall be safe.' Such Christians are correct in their lives, pious in their devotion, earnest in their attendance on the ministrations of the Church, but their religion is wrapped up all in self, is feeble and narrow as it is selfish. The Christianity of such men tempts one to say to them, 'For once, do but for once forget your own soul, and trust it to your Father's love, and go about your Father's business in this world of His, and then see if your soul will not be the richer for so doing, see if it is not true of the spiritual life, as it is of the material life, that he who would save it for himself will often run the risk of losing at least a large measure of it, and he who is willing even to lose or risk it for his Lord, shall save and shall enrich it.'

Consider, in the next place, how this appears in the history of the Church. There was a time in the history of the Church, when saintly men and women, horrified with the wickedness of a world that seemed to be given over to the evil one, fled away into the deserts and hid themselves there apart to lead a life of solitary meditation and devotion. What was the result? The world suffered by the withdrawal of the salt that should have saved it from corruption. But the Church suffered in almost proportionate measure. This Christianity of the eremite in the desert, this Christianity of the cell, shrank to the dimensions of the cell that imprisoned it. There may be an unwise wisdom, and that there may be a judicious expenditure of the Church's wealth.

III. And now, in the last place, let us see how there may be great gain, great wealth, to the Church at home from large expenditure upon missionary work abroad. What are the spiritual gains to the Church at home that our missionaries bring her back from their work abroad, what profit can she make by large and judicious expenditure in the mission field?

1. In the first place, then, observe how missionary work brings us home the evidences of our faith. The message of the Church to the world is not merely an invitation, it is a challenge. Her mission is to be the Church militant here on earth. She follows Him who has girt His sword upon His thigh and goes forth conquering and to conquer, and the banner of the Cross that she lifts up has on it this ensign: '*In hoc signo vinces*;' she must conquer or she will fail.

2. But, in the next place, we gain from the work of the missionary

an idea of the analogy and the proportion of the faith. To distinguish between what is essential and what is not essential, what is fundamental and what may be termed accidental in our faith, is of the very greatest consequence to the Church at home, and yet it is a difficult thing to do. These controversies in which the Church is constantly engaged from day to day about smaller matters of the faith are unduly swollen to a magnitude that is not their own. Now, when the missionaries go forth to their work, they soon discover what are the important and the vital parts of our faith, and what are not so important as we think them at home. They tell us that there are certain things that are everywhere believed by men whom they approach, and that save the souls of those who believe. They tell them of God, and of the soul, of Christ, the dying, the rising, the ascending Christ, the descending Spirit, the Word, the ministry, the Sacraments, and they find that on these the souls of men can live and die. And so they learn to place less stress on, and to give less importance to, many a small unessential shibboleth that may be ringing from one side of the Church to the other at home. As travellers, upon some long and weary and distant journey, lay aside all encumbering and unnecessary baggage, and, if they make their journey often, learn soon to distinguish between what is necessary and what is not, so does the Church in the missionary field learn to distinguish between what is essential in the faith and what is not, and sends us home a useful lesson and message to that effect, and bids us think that the things that concern essentially the salvation and the life of men may not be so many as in the bitterness of our strife, as in the exaggerating fussiness of our partisanship, we assumed them to be at home.

3. Another great gain we have from the missionary work is from time to time a revival of forgotten portions of our faith. Those dogmas in our creeds that have been the results of controversies that shook the Church in former days to her very centre, often lie in the great Catholic Creed rather as trophies lying in some military magazine than as weapons in a storehouse to be snatched up and used in the hour of danger. They have done their work, and lived their day, and we repeat them with languid assent and never think of using them in our daily life. But when the missionary goes out and encounters the old foes of the Church, though with new faces, and when he finds these very same dogmas, half forgotten here, are full of life and power there; when he tells us they are weapons of strength snatched down from the walls of the Church's armoury and borne foremost in the fight, then the old truth has a new life; we see it may have still its preciousness, not only its doctrinal but its practical value, and we try to live it out for ourselves.

4. And, in the next place, surely we learn the lesson of Christian unity. There is no need to dwell much on this. The divisions and the schisms of Christendom—Christianity split at home into two hundred and eighty fragments—are its disgrace and its weakness. The missionaries tell us how these divisions hinder their work abroad, and how they are compelled to neglect and forget them. They tell us how the missionaries, though of different communities, when they stand face to face with the terrible evils of heathendom, stretch out their hands one to another and march on in all but a united body against those evils, and then the thought occurs to us: 'That which they do abroad might we not try in some measure and degree to do at home?'

5. And, in the last place, think what the Church gains by the message and the example of Christian heroism in the mission field. When we hear, for instance, of some band of missionaries giving their lives in the weary, wasting struggle with the fever that lays them low one after the other, until the forests of Africa are dotted here and there with the white crosses that mark the missionaries' graves; or when we read the story—surely never to grow old, in our day at least—the story of that little boat that floated out from the shore of the heathen isle in the Pacific, where lay in his last sleep the great and good missionary-bishop, with his hands folded upon his breast, clasping the palm-leaves that had been placed there by his ignorant and Pagan murderers at once the symbol of his mission and the type of his glorious crown of martyrdom; or when we read the journals of Bishop Hannington, as he sits in his tent writing the last words, with his pen in his hand—words of patience and yet of triumph, full of calm and quiet courage, as he waits to be led out to a foul and cruel death at the hands of the heathen—as these things come home to us in our work here at home, is it not true that 'the tidal-waves of other souls are up into our being rolled'? And so into the homes of many a quiet country pastor, in the somewhat stagnant life, and yet not the pure and perfect life, of his country parish, or into the home of some outworn and weary servant of Christ in the great streets, in the lanes and the slums of our great cities, ready almost to sit down in despair, there comes fresh strength, fresh vigour; and the missionary abroad has given courage to his brother at home, and we feel once more how the blood of the martyrs proves still the seed of the Church.

W. C. MAGEE.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE.

Christ in Social Change.

And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then they shall see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. S. Luke xxi. 25-28.

I. HAT is the social question? What thrusts it to the fore? It is the product of many causes, as every movement in so complex a body as society must be. The main influence may, however, be stated thus. The Reformation was the assertion of individual freedom and individual responsibility, its social result was free competition. Close on the heels of the establishment of free competition as the ruling principle there followed that long series of inventions which have multiplied manifold man's productive power by placing in his hands wonderful mechanical and chemical appliances. The result of free competition under modern conditions has been the aggregation of the means of production, which are the means of life, in the hands of a few. Industry has been organised till it possesses an efficiency unknown, undreamt of before, but competition has concentrated and not diffused the product. The consequence is the few possessing rents and dividends are secure in the enjoyment of necessaries and luxuries; the many who live by the work of their hands are not secure even of necessaries, and in time of depression like the present suffer pangs of hunger, and at all times have before them the probable prospect of ending their days as paupers.

Every day men feel more keenly the injustice, the want of righteousness in society as it is, and more and more vigorous grows the desire to alter it for the better, if only a way can be found.

Side by side with this quickening of the conscience as to social duties and relationships there has been going on another movement. A new class has been rapidly rising to power and influence, the greatest class of all, the class of hand-workers and weekly wage-earners, and they have their own ideas as to the lines of social

change, and are putting forward claims concerning labour and property which, if realised, will go far to revolutionise society, and break the envelope of restriction which has long acted as a protection and strength.

II. We are all familiar with the Christ of Mediæval art, the Christ of Fra Angelico, of Titian, of Raphael, that somewhat unearthly figure of the patient sufferer which hangs lifeless on the cross while below a group of disciples gaze upward in rapt devotion.

Rather more than a year ago a great modern painter who is himself an intensely earnest Christian, when painting a picture of Christ before Pilate, represented Christ as a Socialist leader. The picture was exhibited in some of the cities of the Continent, and working men by thousands went to gaze upon it, and at Hamburg the working men subscribed a large sum in order to secure that the picture should be brought back to their city and exhibited a few weeks longer. That is a sign of the times.

Such a representation of Christ is a daring innovation, lacking perhaps somewhat in reverence, and yet expressing rudely and forcibly one element of truth—teaching as it does that in the social restlessness and new social demands of our age Christians are to look for Christ, and strive to win the new life which is struggling to the birth for Christ.

To look for Christ means we must look at the new ideas, the new aspirations, which are the harbingers of change, with the view of perceiving what in them is expressive of righteousness, and in so far as they appear to lead to the realisation of a reign of greater justice and righteousness, to welcome them as bringing ever so little nearer the kingdom of God. To win the new life for Christ means that Christians, by sympathetic helpfulness in what is righteous in the new social aspirations, must endeavour to remove that hostility and prejudice to Christ which exists on the part of many, and, further, that Christians must labour to permeate the new ideas with Christian principles.

III. Every Advent of Christ is a judgment, a time of testing. Reverence for the law of Moses, scrupulous regard for correct ritual, did not save the Jewish Church. Its gaze fixed on the past, it failed to recognise Christ or hear His voice when He came, and the verdict was: Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?

The social unrest of to-day is a time of testing, not only for the powers which rule our social organisation, but for the Church of England also. Fidelity to the past, yes—but fidelity to the present too and confidence in the future. The test for us, as for the Jews, will be capacity to recognise Christ, to recognise what is true and righteous in rising social aspirations; for us, as for them, the test

will be the possession of the power of spiritual vision which shall enable us to mould the future and free ourselves from the decaying elements of the past, and to lead men to the land of promise which is always ahead. W. MOORE EDE.

The Great Manifestation.

And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. 1 S. JOHN ii. 28.

FROM the subject of last Sunday we pass, by a very natural transition, into that of this day, the last and great Epiphany, the full and final manifestation of the sons of God; and that by an arrangement peculiar to our own church in its appointment of the epistle and gospel, and the collect appropriate to the same. For the collect in a beautiful manner combines in prayer the lesson of both, the mystery of the Incarnation, the purification it requires, and the last appearing of Christ to which it points. The whole is comprised in the short epitome of S. Paul, that 'the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men; teaching us that we should live godly in the present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, who gave Himself for us, that He might purify unto Himself a peculiar people.' But let us listen to S. John himself.

I. 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!' that we should be called His sons and by His calling should be made to be so, His sons in heart and life; first in faith, and then in hope, and then in charity; strange indeed and unspeakable love must it appear to those who value the same, and well may the disciple of divine love pause as if in adoring wonder, and call attention to it as to some great marvel, saying, 'Behold what manner of love!' 'Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not.' There is a whole world around us, men in whose heart this world is, and among them are they in whom God dwells, and yet these know not each other; for God Himself walked among men in the flesh, and the world knew Him not, and how therefore can they know His children? 'They that rebel against the light,' said Job, 'they know not the ways, nor abide in the paths thereof.'

II. 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.' 'As He is,' that is, we shall see Him in His unchangeable, eternal nature as God; we shall see Him in that beatific vision of which it is

said, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,' and in order that we may see Him, 'we shall be like Him;' for the wicked cannot behold Him as God. It is this for which our nature ever desires and longs, it is this for which it ever seeks, and seeking amiss is restless, and unsatisfied, and miserable. 'It is a certain vision,' says S. Augustine, 'which neither eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man. A vision surpassing all there is of earthly beauty in gold and silver, in groves and fields; all that is beautiful in sea and sky, in sun and moon, in stars, in angels; because all things from thence derive what in them is beautiful.' The tongue, adds the same writer, hath done what it could in sounding the words; but it must be left to the heart, to the unction from the Holy One, to think on that which is unspeakable; to long and labour for it in holy desires and aspirations; emptying ourselves of all other desires, that when He shall come he may fill us. For the whole life of a good Christian is a holy longing, a longing for that which he sees not, while he is by that longing rendered capable of beholding: and is ever growing in that desire as he cuts off all love for the world.

III. 'And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure.' For 'by hope,' says S. Paul, 'we are saved,' while that hope of what is as yet unseen exercises patience, and in patient waiting is likened to that for which it waits. For he that hath this living hope by which 'we are saved,' by Him that dwelleth within him cleanseth himself from sin after the example of the Son of God, aiming at that perfection which is in mercy, whereby we may become like unto God. 'He purifieth himself,' for it is his own free will that operates, but that will is thus made one with God's will, whose 'will is our sanctification,' and when our will is one with God's will, it is joined to Almighty power, and overcomes the world.

Such, then, is our present Epiphany, in which we wait for 'the manifestation of the sons of God;' yet such that even now, in this our season of waiting, Christ may be manifested to us, so that we may see and know Him, and wherein we are manifested unto Him and known of God; and how this may be, the epistle has set before us with all possible eloquence of divine love, as seeking with all awfulness and tenderness to engage our affections. Here, then, is all our salvation and our safety—that we may acquaint ourselves with God, and with ourselves, and be at peace. For the Sabbath which now is waiteth for another Sabbath; the Kingdom of Heaven which now is for another Kingdom of Heaven; the Advent which hath been, and which now is, waiteth for another Advent; and this Epiphany, wherein the light shineth through the world, for another Epiphany, wherein the light will be, after another manner, revealed.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

O my soul, art thou pure? art thou purifying thyself, as He is pure, with the hope of that His appearing? or does this exhortation sound unto thee as some strange thing which concerneth the saints, but not thyself? O my soul, what art thou? as a little drop of dew sparkling in the morning sun, but soon to vanish away, such is thy stay below—one drop, like thyself, another little drop, and then again another about thee, yea, thousands on every side, have got up and gone; and thou art going even yet, even yet art going, yet trembling for a moment on the edge of that unutterable change! O my soul, what art thou doing? I. WILLIAMS.

'Not knowing what he said.'

It is good for us to be here. S. Luke ix. 33.

I. WHAT S. Peter meant when he uttered those words, 'It is good for us to be here;' what the feelings were which prompted him to use them, it is of course impossible for us to say.

It may be that he meant something like this—'Master, here on the bleak mountain ridge, exposed to wind and weather, without shelter, food, or the necessaries of life, it is still good to be. For, Master, Thou art here, and we see Thy glory. Here let us remain!'

Or perhaps his words may be differently understood. 'Here, Master, it is surely best for us to be. Here, removed from the scornful, unbelieving crowd, who hate and reject Thee; here, in sweet communion with Thy blessed saints, who "know Thee who Thou art," let us remain. For here are honour, devotion, rest, peace; there, scorn, hatred, and a dark, uncertain future.'

If this be his meaning, we cannot but remember how, once before, the Evil One had made this same disciple the instrument of a subtle temptation to his Master to shrink from His Cross and Passion, when he cried, 'Be it far from Thee, Lord; this shall not be unto Thee!'

Holy Scripture makes but one short, significant comment on the impetuous disciple's words—with that comment let us rest satisfied—'Not knowing what he said!'

II. 'Not knowing,' indeed! It was not for S. Peter to shape the course of the future, either for himself or for his Divine Master.

But even as S. Peter uttered the words in an ecstasy, so are those words being echoed on all sides, by lips which know not what they say. 'It is good to be here. Here let us build up tabernacles.'

A man has hosts of friends, is genial and popular, and made welcome everywhere. The pleasures, the excitements of the world are

freely offered to him, and gladly seized. He finds the world very bright and attractive, and he thoroughly appreciates and loves it. He knows that there are some people who find fault with the world, some who abuse it. He has even heard some bitterly wish themselves dead, and out of it. He cannot understand that. *He* has never wished such a thing. *He* says, 'It is good to be here—very good, I only wish I could always be here.' Here he would love to build a sure resting-place, an abiding tabernacle. Well, the years roll on—changes come—reverses overtake him—the friends who flocked about him in his prosperity vanish. Old age finds him a broken, lonely man; the only ones who really loved him long since dead. He is weary of life. He, the same one who used to say, 'It is good to be here'—who dreaded the time when he would have to bid farewell to the world, is weary of everything, and longs for the end. Ah! in a state in which we have no continuing city, who would say, 'It is good always to be here'?

There are some who, in their love for the world, are saying, 'It is good for us to be here. The world, and the things of the world, are very dear to us—we care for nothing else.' Ah! God open these eyes before the storm break that shall lay their earthly tabernacle in ruins.

There are others who would tarry for ever on the Mount of Transfiguration with their Lord—who dread the daily strife of tongues; the world's sneers, and scoffs, and hardness, and unbelief. Many of us would fain escape the shame and offence of the Cross. But our work lies where that offence daily meets us; and thither God's voice calls us. There let us be found—our loins girded, our lamps burning, when the Master comes.

J. B. C. MURPHY.

War.

And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars; see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass. S. MATTHEW xxiv. 6.

CONSIDER the question, Is war in itself lawful or unlawful? Is it sometimes right and necessary, or is it always wrong?

I. I know that there are many good and deeply religious persons who regard all war as unjustifiable. But surely, against such an opinion, the voice of history, the voice of Scripture, the voice of Christendom, has decisively pronounced. The pages of the Old Testament ring with war: they are full of battles of the warrior with their 'confused noise and garments rolled in blood.' And when we turn to the New Testament we find that S. John the Baptist, when

he plainly told the soldiers their duty, did not bid them abandon their calling, but only be honest in it. And our blessed Lord said that to the last there should be wars and rumours of wars; and in the very last book of our English Bible we read of war in heaven—that eternal, that never-ending conflict between good and evil which in the present state of things often can be fought only with earthly weapons. And so the Church of God has decided. She, like the Holy Scriptures themselves, has made saints of many of her soldiers; and many who, with no saintly title, have fought in God's great armies, have fought also in the armies of earthly kings. Have you never heard of Cromwell's Ironsides, who went to their campaigns each with a field Bible in his knapsack; of the soldiers of Gustavus Adolphus, who charged the foe at Lützen singing Luther's hymn; of the Scotch Cameronians, who seven times with their Christian chief received the public thanks of Marlborough, the great commander; of Nelson's 'Methodists,' who were the most trusted of that hero's crew; of Havelock's 'saints,' who, when others were drunk and disordered, were never drunk, and always ready; of many a godly soldier in the Crimean and in our recent wars, who, shot down in the very thick of dreadful battle, breathed out their souls in one last prayer to their Captain—Christ? Are you prepared to stamp with the brand of guilt, of disobedience to God's eternal laws, those whose glory is blazoned on page after page of your country's history? There lie the crusading Plantagenets, each in his armour, each with his hands clasped in prayer over the quiet breast; on yonder beam, dinted with the battle-axe of Alençon, is a helmet 'that did affright the air at Agincourt.' Beneath it, between the tombs of the warrior Edwards, is the monumental sword which conquered France. There is the grave and there the statue of him who, with eagle face and outstretched hand, still seems (as the historian said) to bid England be of good cheer, and to hurl defiance at her foes. Behind me is the tomb of Wolfe, who in the grey morning struggled with his soldiers up the heights of Abraham, and, thrice wounded, died in the arms of victory; and in the nave lie the soldiers who died at Blenheim, and at Ramillies, and in the Khyber Pass, and on the burning plains of Hindustan, and in the 'thin red line' at Alma.

And if you pass from hence to our other great cathedral you will see the grave of the mighty sailor who shattered the fleet of France in 1798 in Aboukir Bay, and of that mighty soldier of a hundred battles whom many of us have seen, like some eagle of the gods grown white with service, and whose grey-haired virtue was a nobler thing than even Waterloo. 'They shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not rise up against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.'

Is it a purely ideal picture? Does it apply to some realm not of earth? At any rate, there seems as yet no approach to its realisation. When wrong is done, when imposture and oppression disturb the peace of nations, what help is there for the world save in the stern arbitrament of war? 'Peace on earth, goodwill towards men.' So sang the angels who heralded the Saviour's birth; but, if all the shrieks of all the men who have since died in battle could have risen at once, that Christmas carol of the angels would have been drowned in discord, a discord which has too often made an Armageddon of the history of nations, and an Aceldama of the plains of earth.

II. Now, those who hold that all war is of its own nature essentially criminal, naturally dwell upon its horrors, upon the fierce passions that it enkindles, upon the glaring apparent contrasts it presents to the ideal of man's universal brotherhood in Christ. It is right that these views should be presented to us, and that forcibly. We have learned—and it is one of the greatest gains of modern times—we have learned to regard human life as a thing unspeakably sacred. Mankind, which is to history all mass, is, as it has been said, to God all individual. Thank God, we are not a military nation, if by a military nation be meant a nation loving war.

May we ever strive by calmness, by justice, by honourable diplomacy, by long forbearance, by trying to make ourselves among the nations not only feared but loved, by being ready to merge petty interests in the broader interests of humanity, by promoting, if possible, in every case the settlement by impartial arbitration of national disputes; by ever acting up to the truth, that so far as there is any analogy between them the moral law does apply to nations no less than to individuals; may we ever strive to hasten the day when the war-drum shall throb no longer, and nothing be permitted to break the brotherhood of man with man. But meanwhile, it is certain that all war is not immoral. There are interests no less sacred, nay, infinitely more sacred, than those of self-defence. War may often be a nation's plain duty. In the hostile armies the individuals do not hate each other. The cord of Christian brotherhood between them need not be broken. It has been compared to a tempest without a wind. The enmity is between two wholes. The individuals are at peace. How often have men paused in the midst of the storm of battle to save a child or to be merciful to each other's wounded. There is no police, there is no magistracy over nations. War is sometimes the sole possible settlement of national differences. And then remember that war, while it is a physical evil, while it must always remain one of God's four sore judgments, is not necessarily a moral evil. Peace, as we all know, has its creeping guilt, and war has its solemn morality. Even for peace a price too heavy may be

paid, if it be paid by silenced consciences, by base connivance, by broken engagements.

III. And thus does Christianity purify and ennoble what it cannot yet utterly abolish, even as the sun flings the splendours of gold and crimson on the dark masses which he cannot dissipate, or makes of the rushing storm-drops the prism wherewith he arches the thunder-clouds with the sevenfold perfection of divided light. Christianity did not abolish slavery, but provisionally she made her Christian slaves freer and happier than kings. Christianity has not yet abolished war, but provisionally she has consoled its agonies and mingled with magnificent virtues its many crimes. The angel of death, it was then said, is, indeed, an angel of other things than agony. By his light man may learn to see that the earth is no inch-high stage for foolish griefs and feigned pleasures, but a place of sorrow and power, and a question-chamber of trial. The flames of sacrifice can illumine as well as consume. Every affection that seems to sink with those dim life-stains into the earth has been dedicated to the cause for which men died, and every mouldering arm, which will never more embrace his loved ones, has bequeathed to them its faithfulness and its strength.

IV. From these truths, then, I would draw two lessons, the one national, the other individual. (1.) The national lesson is this, that we all pray we may never, like that French statesman, go to war with a light heart; that no war of England henceforth may ever be a crime; that every war of ours be a crusade, if it must be war, a crusade of which we can say, with a conviction as intense as that of the Crusaders at Belmont, '*Dieu le veult.*' (2.) And the other lesson is this—an individual lesson. Every Christian, whether he be a soldier, whether he be a volunteer or not, is, and cannot help being, either a defender or a destroyer of his country.

'Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is the reproach of any people.' Let England keep her ancestral faith, her stainless purity of home, the love and fear of the God of her fathers; let her take Christ as her Captain, and do her duty to the world; and no man, then, shall do her wrong. ARCHDEACON FARRAR.

Keeping the Commandments.

If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments. S. MATTHEW xix. 17.

I. THE glow and the brightness of Christmas is still upon us. We have knelt with shepherds and worshipped with wise men; we have seen the 'glory of the only-begotten of the Father'

in Mary's child; we know that He, who has come among us, has made all things new, that He has given answers to questions asked and asked in vain by those who 'sat in darkness and in the shadow of death.' We recognise perhaps more fully than ever the interval which separates that knowledge of the Father, which has come to us through the Son, from the old dim guesses, the blind obedience, the gropings in the dark, the search for God and all that it involved, which characterised the old dispensation. And yet, in spite of all this tremendous advance, this wondrous change which He has brought, when we come to sit at Christ's feet and He opens His mouth to tell us how we are to enter into life, He sends us back again to the old revelation of Sinai for our first principles. True, He fills them full of a meaning that was unperceived in them before. True, He robs their negative form of its seeming barrenness and dreariness by declaring them to be perfectly kept by the positive law of love; but it is still to the Mosaic commandment that He sends us back for our first principles; it is to what He Himself learnt in a Jewish home when 'He increased in wisdom and in favour with God' —to what He learnt during the self-imposed limitations of His human childhood—to what He received from Mary's lips and heard expounded by the Rabbis of the day.

The ideal set before the Jewish child, based it was on the Ten Commandments, was distinct enough; while the atmosphere that surrounded him was distinctly religious. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of Israel, the God of the promises claimed Him from the first, and His blessings and responsibilities were freely set before Him. Of Jewish training, it was no idle boast that 'they were taught in the law from their earliest youth, that they bore in their souls the image of the Ten Commandments so that they were engraven on their soul.'

Our Lord's attitude towards the Commandments is always one of reverence inasmuch as He recognised the eternal principles which underlay them. His attitude is very different from that which He assumed towards the oral law or towards the prohibitions of the Mishna. The whole moral teaching of the gospel possesses at once novelty and antiquity. On the one hand it possesses novelty, so far as it deduces results from principles—results which from the nature of the case could not have been anticipated. On the other hand, it possesses antiquity, inasmuch as every ideal of morals or religion which is stated therein may be traced back to its older germ in the older Scriptures.

II. And this consideration helps us to see the right position of the Ten Commandments in our Christian system. They contain and assert the germ-thoughts out of which Christian morality grows;

they are not the full expression of Christian duty towards God or towards others, but they are the germ-thoughts which implicitly contain that full expression. They cannot and ought not to be quoted or taught as, in their letter, expressing anything final, but they have assumed their right place when they become laws for the heart—when we ask God to 'incline our hearts to keep this law.' Their letter has undoubtedly ceased to apply to all who have learnt the law of love; but they are not therefore obsolete. They contain the germ-thoughts that lie at the root of all that is best and noblest in Christian conduct. Moreover, if we forget or ignore the law of love, we may need them still in their severe hardness, we may have to go back to their stern and rugged 'Thou shalt not,' and let it begin its work of restraint within us—for any of us that work of restraint may again become the most absolute of necessities. But because we may have to go back to it, because we may find that we need to put ourselves under the stern discipline of 'Thou shalt not,' and to remain there till we have learnt restraint, we must not think for a moment that that prohibition represents God's full claim on ourselves. They are His first words for those who can bear nothing more; His final words are, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind,' and 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'

III. The love of God and of man is a splendid and ennobling conception of a rule of life for those who can rise to it. 'Love,' it has been said, 'and do what you like,' for, if you love, you cannot do wrong. But it is only a law for those who can rise to it. The Ten Commandments remind us in a trenchant fashion that God must rule the outward action as well as the inward feeling; that because, as in the case before us, there is much that is good and beautiful that is mingled with sinful dispositions—because the veil between the highest sympathies which we can feel and the worst feelings, in which we can allow ourselves, is so slender, so easily broken through, so liable almost insensibly to melt away—we do need still the stern self-discipline of the 'Thou shalt not' of the external rule of conduct which is emphasised in the Ten Commandments.

R. EYTON.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Glory. In the history of the earth, molluscs, fishes, reptiles,
1 S. John iii. 2. mammals, had each in succession their periods of vast duration; and then the human period began,—the period of a fellow-worker with God, created in God's own image. What is to be the next advance? Is there to be merely a repetition of the past? No. The geologist finds no example of dynasties once passed away again returning. There has been no repetition of the dynasty of the fish, of the reptile, of the mammal. The dynasty of the future is to have glorified man for its inhabitant; but it is to be the dynasty—'the kingdom'—not of glorified man, . . . but of God Himself in the form of man. In the doctrine of the two natures, human and divine, and in the further doctrine that the terminal dynasty = ('We shall be like Him')—we find that required progression beyond which progress cannot go. We find the point of elevation never to be exceeded meetly coincident with the final period never to be terminated. . . . The long ascending line from dead matter to man has been a progress Godwards; not an asymptotical progress, but destined from the beginning to furnish a point of union.

The Coming of the Son of Man. The Rev. Edward Irving was once preaching at Perth.
S. Matt. xxiv. 27. His text was taken from the twenty-fourth chapter of S. Matthew, regarding the coming of the Son of Man. While he was engaged in unfolding his subject, from out of a dark cloud, which obscured the church, there came forth a bright blaze of lightning and a crash of thunder. There was deep stillness in the audience. The preacher paused; and from the stillness and the gloom, his powerful voice, clothed with increased solemnity, pronounced these words: 'For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.'

Benevolence. An eminent layman, in making a platform missionary
Prov. xi. 24. speech said, 'I have heard of churches starving out from a saving spirit; but I have never heard of one dying of benevolence. And if I could hear of one such, I would make a pilgrimage to it, by night, and in that quiet solitude, with the moon shining and the aged elm waving, I would put my hands on the moss-clad ruins, and gazing on the venerable scene would say, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."'

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Benevolence. Dr. Hall tells the story of a Scotsman who sung most
Prov. xi. 24. piously the hymn,—

> 'Were the whole realm of nature mine,
> That were a present far too small,'

and all through the singing was fumbling in his pocket to make sure of the smallest piece of silver for the contribution-box.

Liberality. At a missionary meeting held soon after the accession of
Prov. xi. 24. our present Queen, one of the speakers related an anecdote concerning the Duchess of Kent and her royal daughter, which well illustrates how comfort and profit may attend giving liberally to the Lord. About fifty years ago there was a lighthouse on the southern coast, which was kept by a certain godly widow, who, not knowing how otherwise to aid the missionary cause, resolved that during the summer season she would place in the box the total of one day's gratuities received from visitors. Among the callers on a particular day was a lady attired as a widow accompanied by a little girl; and it appears that the two widows, drawn together as it were by common sympathy, conversed on their bereavements, tears mingling with their words. On leaving, the lady left a sovereign with her humble friend, and that day was the one set apart for placing all receipts into the missionary-box! The widow was thrown into a state of perplexity, poverty seeming to plead on the one hand, while her pledged word confronted her on the other. After thinking about the thing for some time, she put half-a-crown in the box; but on retiring to rest, found conscience sufficiently lively to deprive her of sleep. To obtain relief, she now rose, took back the silver and surrendered the gold, after which rest returned to her eyelids, and in the morning she felt comforted and refreshed. The matter occasioned no further trouble, but a few days afterwards the widow received a franked letter containing twenty pounds from the elder lady above mentioned, and five pounds from the younger: the first turning out to have been the Duchess of Kent, and the other the Princess Victoria, who now occupies the British Throne.

A Soft Answer. A Little Sister of the Poor, who went about begging for
Prov. xv. 1. money and broken food and cast-off clothing for the needy, one day asked help from one who was rich and by position at least a gentleman. He had a great dislike to being asked for alms, and after roughly refusing her, at last even struck the Sister. She only said gently, 'That was for myself; now won't you give me something for my poor?' And the man was so ashamed of himself that he gave her a liberal subscription.

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE.

The Heavenly Race.

So run, that ye may obtain. 1 CORINTHIANS ix. 24.

THERE are few things upon record, in which the exertion was so violent while it lasted, and yet so short, as one of the races of the ancient Greeks. And therefore it stands at least four times in S. Paul's epistles, as the emblem at once of the brevity of the duration, and the resoluteness of the struggle, of the Christian life.

We can conceive, perhaps, how the believer's career, in this present world, will look in the retrospect, when he casts his eye back upon it from eternity.

First there came a divine influence, then the high thoughts of a holy ambition, then an earnest determination and a fixed resolve, then all the happy self-discipline, then the conflict, the race, severe even unto death, all-absorbing, swelling: he rushed, he passed by, and all is over; and then the rest, and it was sweet; and the joy, and it was dear.

In that course—so arduous and so very short—all of you are occupying now your positions; as many of you as have, indeed, ever entered upon the Christian lists.

Your stadium—that is the word in the original—your stadium is the little span of your present existence, the spectators are none other than the holy angels, who are encompassing you all around, and look down upon you from their higher spheres; the heralds are the ministers of God's grace, who call you to the contest, and animate you by the way; the competitors are the whole Church militant; the umpire, to award the victor's crown, is the Lord Jesus; and the crown is life eternal.

Already some have run their appointed distance, and are sitting down in their quiet resting-places, not uninterested, I conceive, in the fears and hopes, the sorrows and the joys, of those who are filling, after them, the same exciting scene. Others are just arranging and offering themselves for the critical enterprise; while many are straining in the heat and conflict of the day, holding their relative places according to the good hand of their God upon them, and are midway between the starting and the goal.

But, alas! there are some, not a few even among you, who have never had the energy yet, or the faith, or the love, even to set out! Yet some—God grant that these may be few indeed—yet some who did 'run well,' but, bewitched with the world's sorcery, they have ceased to run; and for indulgence sake, and idleness sake, and for the world's sake, they are contented now to forfeit the very prize which once they sought!

It was entirely according to the usual accuracy of the Apostle's mind, that he could not touch such an image as this, without making it exact; and therefore I am not surprised to find him laying down a proportion, even here, between the means and the success, the way and the end—'So run that ye may obtain.'

And we shall only be fulfilling our present duty which devolves upon us, as the heralds of the heavenly race, if we endeavour to set before you some of those conditions and stipulations of the course, upon which your first admission, and your subsequent victory, must absolutely depend.

If, then, there be any one of you who really wishes to compete for heaven, let that man know first, that in those Isthmian games of which S. Paul is speaking, it was an established law, that none should join who were not first freemen, and then men of unspotted moral character.

We read that the custom was that, as soon as the combatants appeared, the crier, having commanded silence, laid his hand on the head of each of them, in succession, demanding with a loud voice of all the assembly, 'Is there any one here who can accuse this man of being a slave, or being guilty of any moral wrongs of life?'

If any stain was found upon his character, he was excluded from the lists; but if otherwise, then he was led to the altar of Jupiter, there to make solemn oath that he would conform to all the regulations of the sacred games, and so he proceeded to the brunt.

And now, brethren, what and if God should make proclamation to-night, that none are to be permitted to consider themselves as candidates for the crown of life, except those who, being really set free from the power of sin, are living at this moment in the violation of no single one of God's laws?

Say, could you pass the scrutiny? Scrutiny! the very scrutiny of which S. Paul speaks in the last verse of this chapter, when he says, 'I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway—('Castaway' meaning 'not approved in the scrutiny')—that is, 'I should not be approved in the scrutiny.' I say, can you pass the scrutiny?

Can you run the Christian course with an ingenuous, enlarged,

happy consciousness in your own mind, that you are exempt from every positive moral stain?

Or else, if there be any secret love of sin, believe me, brethren, men may reckon you in the number of candidates, but God does not! He will not give you a place, no, not even a trial! You can have 'no part or lot in the matter!' You have no share in the Christian race!

But, let me now conceive that the examination has shown you one who, really believing in Christ, is emancipated from the fetter of sin, and that you are living in the obedience of God's moral law. And let me conceive, now, that the vows of God are upon you, that you have solemnly pledged yourselves, and that you are desirous to proceed, in the Lord's name, to the holy work of getting to heaven.

You must follow me then next where S. Paul, in another place (where he is using the same image), calls all to go who would get to heaven, to the stripping-room, to the stripping yourselves of all those unnecessary 'weights,' which must inevitably trammel your steps, and prevent your progress, and preclude your triumph, if you 'run'—'Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.'

Now my mind misgives me, but that there are some here who, while they could not be fairly charged with any particular breach of God's moral law, are, nevertheless, sadly and fearfully 'weighty' with many things. You call them 'pleasures,' God calls them 'weights.'

Getting money, hoarding money, personal vanity, worldly amusements, society where God is not, self-indulgence, private selfishness—what are these things but clogs, clogs that have loaded your soul for many a year, and dragged it down to the dust?

And what has been will be again. You cannot 'run' with those things on. Will you cumber and tie up your energies, when you need to stretch them to the uttermost? Will you bind the soul which longs to fly? Why, brethren, in the natural course, men are minute and accurate to the weight of an ounce, and will you trifle with those fearful odds?

You may set out; but if your heart is not in it, it will only be soon to creep, and then to crawl, and then to stop, and then to lie down, and then to go to sleep, and then to die!

Therefore make up your mind at once, go into the stripping-room, put off the world, undress yourself from its fascinations, cast aside those hindrances, else do not call yourself a runner; and give up all your hope that you shall ever have the crown.

But now, entered on the race, it is my duty to give you another

thought. S. Paul, speaking of himself in the epistle to the Philippians, says, 'I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' Do you understand the expression, 'I press toward the mark for the prize'? It cannot be that 'the mark' and 'the prize' are the same thing.

What does 'the mark' mean? 'The mark' means a certain line, which was drawn along the course, to show the runners exactly where they were to run, so that if you would run lawfully take care not only that you are going to the right object, but that you are pursuing that object along the right line. 'Press to the mark.'

And what is the Christian's 'mark' to which he must 'press'? In general words, the Scriptural method of salvation which God has pointed out—true doctrine, the use of all ordinances, prayer, public worship, sacraments, the Bible, personal holiness, the fellowships of Christians, works of love.

Thus 'the mark' stretches itself out all along. 'Press' to it. Every day consult your Bible to find your 'mark.' Do not you part from it for any theories of men, for any fancies of your own mind, lest, quitting 'the mark,' you miss the way, and then find, after all, you have been wasting your time, and your fervour, and your soul, for that which has only led you further and further away from 'the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'

At the time when S. Paul was writing, there was a particular race, to which he was thought to have had reference, partly here, and more in his twelfth chapter to the Hebrews.

In that race every runner carried a torch; and he won the race who came in first, bringing with him his torch still alight. Some, running very fast, so put out their torch; others running slowly, kept their torch in, but arrived too late.

Beware lest a false excitement put out the flame of love! and yet beware, equally, lest over-caution hinder your steps too long! but let zeal and love, patience and speed, go hand in hand with equal pace, for so heaven is won!

And now I see you in the midst of your glorious career. But let none tell you that, as life goes on, the difficulties and the struggles of the Christian grow less. They do not. Every race quickens as it proceeds; and the competition grows greater. The whole man must be in it. Every faculty that God has given you must be put forth. Your intellect, your affections, your spirit, your body, must all work, and work intently. You must stretch to the point; and beyond the point where the stretch is pain.

Your conflict, indeed, is not with those who are engaged with you in the same pursuit, for in this race he wins the highest prize who has urged on and assisted all the way his fellows, but your race is to

beat the world; your race is to outstrip your own wicked heart; your race is to overcome wicked deeds, and you are to emulate and strives to overreach that which is good.

And with this you must run with the confidence of a man who feels that one wrong step, one lost hour, would forfeit all!

Wrestling prayer in the closet, daily crucifying of the old man, steady, bent, laborious effort to do good and to please God, earnest, secret communion between a soul and God, a noble, sanctified ambition, these are marks of the aspirants of eternal life—'So run that ye may obtain.'

That you may do all this, God has given you one secret. The secret of every race, perhaps, is fixedness of eye. Therefore this Apostle has given us, in two separate places, two directions in this matter of the fixed eye.

The first is that we should 'forget the things which are behind'—which I conceive to mean not the world, which we have abandoned; and our old tastes and pursuits, which we had once; but I conceive it to be that we must be always counting our own past attainment nothing, utterly despising all we have done and all we are, contrasting it with the higher degrees always opening before us with infinite series, in which grace is always to be climbing up to glory; and glory climbing up to God.

But, secondly, the Apostle gives us this one, short, emphatic, blessed exhortation, the very sum and centre of all the peace and of all the triumph of every soul that ever got to heaven—'Looking unto Jesus.'

The athletic racer quickens his speed, and feels his courage mount higher, as another and another glimpse of his resting-place makes him feel as if already he were winning the object of all his desires; and oh! if it be but a thought of Jesus, if it be but a sympathy with Jesus, if it be but one glance of His glory, that look will do more to help and to cheer a man in his struggling life, than any other thing which ever was devised in earth or heaven.

JAMES VAUGHAN.

'Keeping under the Body.'

I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection. 1 CORINTHIANS ix. 27.

THE epistle of to-day begins to look out towards Lenten exercises. And we have this thought put before us in preparation, that the body is a bad master though it may be a good servant. The true position and character of the body is always service. S. Paul does not wish to be rid of it—'Not that I would be unclothed;' but he desires to put it in its proper place. And to

this end he draws a metaphor from the pugilistic contests; and he says that he does with his body what a man in training does, he disciplines it, or, as the original word means, he batters it, and by strict and severe treatment subjects it to his higher nature and a spiritual will.

I. It is very important to lay down and maintain the right relations between the body and the soul. It is quite essential to a high morality to have a respectful sense of the dignity of the body. But some, in strong feeling of the crampings and defilings of the material part of their being, are inclined to depreciate the body too much. They contrast it with the immortality of the soul, as if it were not immortal; forgetting, or not seeing, that the body is as eternal as the soul. And so they treat it and speak of it as a thing to be little thought of and despised—not considering that what our Lord Himself was pleased to wear, and does wear now, must, on that very account, be honourable, and that when He was upon the earth, His sympathy and love, His teaching and His wonder-works, were addressed to the full as much to the body as ever they were to the soul. And if the body cannot be without the soul, equally cannot the soul be without the body, except for a very little while, to enhance the re-union and the perfection which are to follow it. Therefore, there may be, and there is, a too great disparagement of the body.

There are times when it is as right and religious a thing to attend to the body as ever it is to the soul. Very sad will it be for us if when we are infirm and sick we have such a thought as this—that it is not as high a duty and as pleasing to God to think of the body, and to minister to the body, as it is to the mind. Are they not equally the subjects of God's creation and God's redemption, of the Father's care and the Father's love? Never look upon it as a pious thing to depreciate the body. Never say, 'I do not care what becomes of my body when I die.' Are not the walls of a temple, though ruined, holy still? And is not that dead body the seed of that glorious body which is to live and reign for ever and ever?

We are not depreciating the body when we say, 'I keep under the body, and bring it into subjection.' The very connection in which S. Paul uses the words does away with that thought, and establishes the contrary. For does the racer, does the wrestler, does the boxer, despise his body? Is not it rather his glory? Is not it because he honours it, and because he values it very highly, that he so treats it and so habituates it—'I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.'

II. With these cautions, we may now look more carefully to see what place the body occupies in the connection which it has with the

spirit of a man. Originally, as we were taught this morning, the whole man was made in the image and after the likeness of God. There is no reason to exclude the body from that image. The Incarnate Son of Man lay at that moment in the counsels of God in His human form, and in the likeness not of that body which Christ wore in His humiliation, but of that glorified body which He afterwards assumed, and which He carries now, the body of Adam was moulded and made.

Then came the Fall. It was equally through the channel of the body as through the channel of the mind. The body fell in a carnal way, through what was good to the taste, and pleasant to the eye—the mind, through ambition of a false and forbidden knowledge. And as both sinned, so both were punished alike—the toil, and pain, and travail to the one—the sin, and sorrow, and conflict to the other.

In due time, Christ came, and equally redeemed both body and soul. Therefore He took both, therefore He suffered, intensely suffered, in both. Therefore He raised both from the grave, and therefore He has exalted both with Him in heaven, that He might first be of both the Substitute, and then of both the Representative. Is He the Saviour of the soul? Is He not also of the body? Let the believer never doubt that his body, as his soul, is infinitely precious.

III. But now, here comes in the important distinction which determines everything—the distinction which S. Paul draws in the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. In the renewed man a change immediately takes place in his soul. All the change which ever is to take place has taken place, excepting in degree. His affections are changed, his desires are changed—his pleasures are changed—his pains are changed—his motives of action are changed—his very spiritual essence is changed;—but his body is not changed the least. It is just the same heavy, clogging thing it ever was. It is just the same passions and the same disposition to sin, after its conversion, as it had before. It is a positively changed soul in a positively unchanged body. The change of the body is to be presently, but it is not yet. That will take place at the resurrection. Hence the spiritual difference! hence the misery and the shame! 'Ourselves, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body.'

And this is that which now gives that superiority to the soul in that else perfectly equal compound of the material and spiritual which makes a man, and which establishes that command which the soul is to exercise over the body, and of which S. Paul is speaking when he says, 'I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.'

I do not wonder that so many are sinfully longing to get rid of their

body. I do not wonder that so many speak of it with so much indiscriminating contempt. But the Christian's part is to deal with this matter measuredly and balancedly. Remember, there is not a member or a nerve in the body but it is capable of being a great sin or a high virtue. There is not a use which cannot be either perfectly legitimate or utterly wrong. Every part admits of sanctification. All are given for a purpose, and that purpose is to glorify God. The whole body, in all its complex being, is for happiness, for usefulness, for service, for eternity, for God. What we have to do is not to destroy anything, but to guide it—not to do away, but to purify—not to despise, but to elevate—not to cast off as an enemy, but to employ as a servant, and so turn into an instrument. And so you make your body really yours; and when it is in this subordination, it becomes your friend: 'I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.'

Let me take an instance or two.

There is the love of dress. It is a natural instinct, and being material, it belongs most to the body. It is in itself a perfectly innocent thing, and may give a pure pleasure. And some attention as to personal appearance is inseparable from every rightly-constituted mind. Nay, it may do more. It may cultivate some very important powers of the mind, and by increasing influence, it may minister to the highest purposes of life. God Himself has sanctified the taste for dress, by exercising it on the beautiful garments and white robes of heaven. Yet every one knows that the love of dress is one of the greatest temptations of the age—to selfishness, to vanity, to extravagance, to sin. What shall we do, then, with the love of dress? Crush it? No. Employ it, control it, subject it. Thus:

Respecting dress, always act upon a principle, and lay down for yourselves certain rules which your own judgment and conscience approve. Whether you pay for your dress yourself, or another pays for it, settle with yourself how much your dress ought to cost in the year, and be faithful to your estimate. Dress in the way that will please those whom you most ought to please, and not to please yourself. Make it a school of refinement and thought. Let it be neither above nor below the standard which you judge to be becoming a Christian in your rank of life, and most likely, by God's blessing, to enable you to adorn the gospel, and to do some work for Christ in the particular society in which you move. Up to that point, dress; beyond it never go. So you will turn a dangerous thing into a good discipline, and a positive grace. And that love of dress being not the master you obey, but the servant that you use, you will 'keep under the body, and bring it into subjection.'

In like manner, as to food. There is a religious principle involved.

Therefore, act upon rules, which you deliberately form, and sacredly keep. Guide your conscience in this matter by the Bible; then live by your conscience. In ordinary occasions, abstinence is not the law, but moderation; the higher law of moderation. The body may triumph by a fast, quite as much as it may by a feast. Keep the natural appetites always a little in check, and be within the line where you think excess would begin. There are thousands of opportunities every day of your life for little self-victories about eating and drinking, which will go far to form your character, and which are very pleasing and honouring to God. Throw the bias on the other side to inclination. To pamper the flesh is to foster a foe and to tempt the devil. But, in this matter, take care that you live unselfishly. Charity is the great antidote to all greediness, and all epicurism. Remember, while you are eating and drinking, whom you follow; and among whom, in this world of want and suffering, you are living —what that body tabernacles, and where it and you are going.

Do not let the body—'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life'—ever get the upper hand. Hold you them, and not they you. Remember that the body is to be a wing to help you to soar, and not a leaden weight to drag you down to the ground. Bring your whole being where it ought to be, lower and lower. I will tell you how. Lead a consecrated life. I do not believe that you will ever succeed in managing your body till you begin to lead a consecrated life. Whatever you have—beauty, personal attraction, talent, cleverness, knowledge, money, position, power—consecrate it. To make life a mission is the only way to live.

Once for all determine it with yourself that you have a vocation, that that vocation is for Jesus Christ. Only set your aim high enough, and you will do well. You wish to be great, you wish to do something. Be great for Christ, and resolve to offer your body to Him, who gave—as none ever gave or can give—His Body for you.

So, all your body, in all its deep mystery, will fulfil the high end for which it was created, and be subjected indeed, as it ought to be, when it is laid on that altar, and presented 'a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.'

JAMES VAUGHAN.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

Character: The Incorruptible Crown.

They do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.
1 CORINTHIANS ix. 25.

I. S. PAUL is claiming human energy for its highest work. He has gone on and up till he has gained great visions of what man may be and do. His heart is glowing with the prospect of sublime achievement. Then he looks around and listens. He hears the sound of human activity on every side. The figure of the race-course rises before him. He sees the eager competitors first training themselves with painful self-control, and then flinging themselves into the struggle and straining every effort for a crown of leaves. 'There is no lack of energy,' he seems to say. The world has force enough, if only we can have it for the highest purposes. If only self-restraint and enthusiasm and skill and fiery zeal can be poured into these more worthy channels. If only we can run the perfect race as these men run in the racecourse whose prize is this laurel, which will fade before the morning. It is a longing which has come to the minds of all enthusiasts who craved for the one thing which, in all the world, seemed precious to them, that which they saw men freely giving to less precious things. It was in the mind of Jesus when He said to His disciples, 'The children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light.' In the mind of S. Paul the longing is full of hope and courage. The energy is here. Let it find its true task, and what marvels it will do! Some day the stream which goes playing with its banks will smite the precipice, and then will come the cataract. Some day the sun which is sleeping on the granite will find the jewel and pour a tumult of living light into its heart. All great men who have ever lived, seeing what man might be and do, and seeing what human power was manifesting itself abundantly, have taken courage and lived and died in hope, beholding in the distance the vision of the day when the power should find the task and the task should find the power.

Yes, there is no lack of force. Never did men feel the abundance of unused and misused force as it is felt to-day. Nowhere is the student of the future met by the awful problem of a dead world, an unborn clod or a burnt-out cinder to be kindled into life. The life is here. Only so often it plays instead of working, and loiters instead of running, and is eager not about the greatest but about the least. Where is the noisy energy and great zeal to-day? It is where men are seeking money, not where men are seeking truth. It is where men are pursuing selfish ambitions, not where they are labouring for

the common good. It is where the things of the flesh, not the things of the Spirit, are the prize. So it appears at least upon the surface. So runs the lamentation of anxious hearts.

II. Turn from the wide world, which it is so easy to abuse, so hard to understand, and think of your own life, which you do know. There are high desires, noble discontents and ambitions in you. You know that they are there. But is not the dissatisfaction of your whole life this, that it is not they that get your most devoted thought and eager action? It is 'the meat that perisheth' for which you really labour. It is the prize of the moment that sets you all astir with desire, with indignation, with hope, with fear. All the time off there in the distance on its shrine shines pure and white the real ultimate desire of your nature, adored and treasured, but too far away and cold to draw to it the tides of passion, love, and hate, which spend their force upon the trifles of the day. To be excited in the higher activities is labelled with the dark name of fanaticism. It is in these cool groves of the sublime hopes that men expect to meet the haunting or haunted presence of the crank. A hundred years ago it was provided that an annual sermon should be preached in Boston, one of the appointed themes of which was 'Against Enthusiasm.'

The kingdom of heaven 'suffering violence' and the 'violent taking it by storm' seem sacrilege and outrage to many of the most religious and devout of souls.

But all such misgivings do not take strong hold or go very deep. Nature protests against them. It is impossible to repress the upward movement of the higher powers. Fire demands the finest fuel that it may burn with its clearest flame, and therefore the dream is always present to the heart of man, and will not be dispelled, that the best energy of man, his skill and power of effective combination and earnest enthusiasm, must ultimately find their full development and highest occupation in the region of man's noblest influence.

The beauty of S. Paul's great spirit is that he feels one life-blood beating through humanity from top to bottom. He accepts the earthly racecourse while he asserts the glory of the celestial struggle. He would have man, body and soul and spirit, sanctified wholly. His sense of man through all his nature fed and inspired by God is like the sense of nature, which, without condescension on the one side and without unnatural strain upon the other, shapes and colours the grass-blade in the valley and builds the stately forest, with its profuse world of shade upon the hills.

III. The two great wonderful regions of life which we call character and service are the regions in which the human powers fulfil themselves and put on their full strength and glory. In seeking character,

in rendering unselfish, self-sacrificing service, ingenuity becomes a hundred-fold acute, assiduity is clothed with an unguessed-of industry, imagination grows into bewildering fervour, love and ambition are transfigured into passions, and with the increase of strength comes an increase of fineness which shows the old powers which once hammered at the low forges of life were not merely doing higher things, but shining themselves with the revealed radiance of their true natures. Vulcan has shown himself a god. These are the regions where the saints have meditated and the heroes fought, into which the saintly and heroic parts of our own lives have pressed sometimes, and known, in spite of themselves, that they were saintly and heroic.

And so we come to this, that it is only to man daring to think of himself nobly, divinely—ay, as the son of God—that there comes the possibility of putting his human powers to their perfect use. Character and service both fling their doors wide open to him who knows himself the son of God. Think how they stood wide open all the time to Jesus. Think how He always lived within their ample gates. The divine soul within Him and the great work before Him, to be Himself and to save the world, these made His life. Therefore let the foxes have their holes and the birds of the air their nests, let Pilate sit upon his throne, and the Pharisees weigh their mint, anise, and cummin. He took these splendid human capacities of ours, and carried them beyond the stars into the heavenly worlds of character and service, and when men listened—as they had to listen—hark, in these visionary worlds, the same old human faculties had put out a new strength and worked with a pulse of power and a throb of music which made heaven and earth stand still to listen. Yet it was our human patience with which He was patient, and our human bravery with which He was brave, and our human intelligence with which He knew, and our human purity with which He was pure, only they proved themselves divine when they attained their full humanity.

PHILLIPS BROOKS.

Fasting and Self-Indulgence.

And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown: but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. 1 CORINTHIANS IX. 25-27.

THERE is one obvious method of learning self-control, which is inculcated throughout the Bible, which is distinctly enjoined by the Church, by our own Church, as well as by all other branches

of the Church Catholic, which is warranted by reason and experience, but which is yet generally disregarded and even derided by many who believe themselves to be strictly and conscientiously religious. The duty of fasting is almost as prominent in the Bible as that of prayer. Leaving aside the Old Testament, in which, of course, fasting is continually referred to, what can be plainer than our Lord's recognition of this means of gaining spiritual strength? Not only His own practice, but His reiterated references to it prove this. He assumes, without a direct command, that His disciples will fast, and He only adds directions as to the manner of their fasting. What our Lord thus taught and practised has been taught and practised continuously by His Church. The Apostles and early Christians were assiduous in their fasting; a solemn fast with prayer preceded their ordinations, for which reason our Church commands us to observe the Ember season in like manner: and in their personal practice, as we see from this passage of S. Paul, keeping under the body and bringing it into subjection was a well-known and well-used method. 'In fastings often,' so S. Paul describes his own course of life; and in this he was but following his Lord, and setting an example which the later Church has imitated. It is unnecessary to multiply instances. Fasting as a Christian duty has been so strongly enjoined, so continuously and strictly practised, by all those whose lives we, as Christians compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses, are bound to reverence and to imitate, that it ought to be as needless to prove it as it would be to prove the duty of prayer, or of love to God and to man.

I. It should be clearly understood that though there are several senses in which the word may be used, the fasting which is inculcated in the Bible, and enjoined by the Church, is literally abstinence, in some manner or other, from food. I put it plainly and simply, because this is often misrepresented and misunderstood. Many lawful pleasures and comforts a Christian may give up for Christ's sake, and may be truly blessed in his self-denial, but without fasting in the true sense of the word. This is often resisted and disregarded. Men think that they may pick and choose the kind of self-denial that suits them, may make a cross for themselves, and leave aside the cross which God intends for them. So they give up this or that pleasure, which is perhaps no pleasure to them, and fancy that they are keeping Christ's command by so doing. They argue sometimes that to give up certain kinds of food, or to live sparingly, is no privation to them, and therefore they need not practise it; they will look for their fasting elsewhere. But all this is wilfulness; instead of curbing, it ministers to the spirit of self-indulgence and self-will. Few of us can safely assume that we may dispense with self-denial in food. Excess or

self-indulgence in this respect has a direct effect upon our moral and spiritual life; men who indulge themselves in food grow indolent, indifferent, careless to the higher influences, deaf to the voice of spiritual things. And, as a means of self-restraint, a rule of fasting seems to be more effectual than any other. It is simple to observe, difficult to evade or explain away; it recurs regularly, affecting us wherever we may be, or whatever we may be engaged in; it is an unfailing instrument for strengthening the will, and for subduing the lower elements in us.

II. I do not wish to lay down rules where our Church has deliberately left us free; I have no right to dictate to any one the manner or the exact degree of his abstinence. Certain days and seasons for fasting are prescribed by the Church, and wisely, for otherwise we should be apt to forget the duty altogether. But as to the manner of fasting, this is left to each to judge of for himself. One thing is certain, that we are not called upon merely to be temperate—though that, of course, is a duty—but we are called upon to fast, and the two things are different. The Christian rule is not satisfied without some sort of abstinence from food, which involves the actual feeling of privation and a conscious effort of the will. But this must necessarily vary with different persons. Some are able without discomfort to give up what to another is almost a necessary of life; some would endanger their health by privations that others habitually and unconsciously practise. Whether our fasting take the form of giving up one kind of food, or of giving up food at certain times of the day, or whatever other rule we adopt, the Church allows us this freedom, so long as the rule is a reality, so long as it is regularly observed, so long as it carries out S. Paul's injunction to 'keep under the body, and bring it into subjection.' For which of us is there that has not need of every weapon against the enemies, our sins? which of us may not be a castaway to-morrow, if we neglect the safeguard which God has given us? Instances and memories of lives that have been wrecked crowd on my mind as I speak to you, as I urge you to lay to heart the solemn warning, 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.'

A. T. LYTTELTON.

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

Vague Running and Ineffective Fighting.

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly: so fight I, not as one that beateth the air.
1 Corinthians ix. 26.

THE general subject of this chapter is S. Paul's voluntary cession of certain rights which belonged to him as an Apostle. He might have claimed an entire exemption from all labours for his own support. He might have urged in his own behalf the universal right of all teachers of the gospel to 'live of the gospel;' to receive a maintenance from the congregations to which they minister. But he had not done so. He blames no one for accepting such a maintenance: but it was a sort of pride with him, what he calls a matter of 'glorying,' not to accept a maintenance himself. He hoped to make his gospel more acceptable by removing out of its way the suspicion, however unfounded, however unreasonable, that it was either idleness or covetousness which prompted him to proclaim it. In short, in this, as in all things, he kept his eye steadily fixed on an object; and that object was to 'gain' all men. I seek not yours but you, was the motto of his ministry. Gain, with him, was success in winning souls. And he thought no sacrifice too great, and no skill and ingenuity misplaced, in effecting this work. He sought to adapt himself to every variety of natural character and of religious circumstance, that he might succeed in bringing Christ home to each, and in rescuing and saving souls for Him.

'I therefore so run, as not uncertainly: so fight I, as not beating the air.' We have here two topics: first, the danger of running vaguely; and secondly, the danger of fighting ineffectively.

I. I so run, S. Paul says, as not vaguely. There is a danger, then, of doing that; of running vaguely. And I will mention two modes of this error.

1. We may fail to keep the goal in view.

The Christian life is a precarious thing, humanly speaking—and, indeed, more than humanly speaking—in each one of us. Precarious on many accounts: but on no account more precarious, than because we are so apt to lose sight of our goal; and, if we do this, we must run at hazard or go wrong.

I greatly fear that many of us have no definite goal at all. Every one, when asked, hopes to reach heaven. But what is heaven? and what is reaching it? I am sure we, many of us, have no real, certainly no adequate, notion of heaven. A safe place; a place of rest after earth; a place of meeting lost friends; a place of calm and tranquillity; a place where sorrow, and crying, and pain, and change,

will be no more. These are our more thoughtful ideas of heaven. I hope and believe that they are all true. But I am quite sure they are not the whole of heaven. I am quite sure they do not altogether make up, they scarcely touch, S. Paul's idea of heaven. I am quite sure that, if heaven at all, they are heaven without its foundation, and heaven without its sun. S. Paul's heaven was very briefly defined: where Christ is. 'I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ.'

It is impossible that we should desire this sort of heaven, or have it for our goal, unless we know something of Christ, unless we know much of Christ, here below. This is obviously a first requisite. Many of us do without Christ here; yes, I say it very seriously, many of us dispense with Christ, set Him aside, in our daily life below. They cannot, except in a very figurative and feeble sense, have the place, or the world, or the eternity—call it which you will—where Christ is, for their aim, their desire, their goal.

But even those who know something of Christ may yet run vaguely in the same sense. They often lose sight of their goal. Which of us keeps the goal always in view? Be not hasty to answer that question. Think what it implies. It implies that, in all we do, in all that we busy ourselves in, in all our chief plans and desires and judgments, we regard everything as conducive, or the contrary, to our reaching heaven, to our at last departing and being with Christ. Think what that means. Think how unworldly, think how heavenly-minded, think how charitable and unselfish and pure, that man must be, who is, in the sense thus explained, running as not vaguely; running, that is, first of all, with his goal full in view, and that goal the right one.

2. But, again, we may run vaguely, by failing to keep within the course.

There were very strict rules on this point in the games of Greece. Every part of the course was rigidly marked out. There was no surreptitious way of reaching the goal. There was no short cut to the goal. The course must be all fairly traversed. In some of these competitions it was a double race; to the goal and back again: or rather, the goal was on the starting-line, and the safe return was everything. In this case there were many perils attending the turning-point. An unskilful charioteer was either thrown out of the competition by a too circuitous turning, or by too abrupt a turning wrecked upon the limit-post.

Now in that to which S. Paul here applies this earthly comparison, all these dangers have their counterpart. A Christian has not only to keep the goal in view, but he has also all along to keep within the course. What does this mean? It denotes something very im-

portant, and something which can by no means be assumed. It means that we must live exactly by Christ's rules throughout our life on earth.

II. But I must turn to the second danger; that of fighting ineffectively. So fight I, as not beating the air. That was an expression applied by the ancient writers to strokes that fell short of the adversary, whether by misdirection on the one side, or by skilful evasion on the other.

Now we may beat the air, in a similar sense, that is, fight ineffectively, in either of two ways.

1. We may mistake our real enemy. We may direct our attacks upon a wrong point. We may assail the wrong person. We have an enemy, but we do not always know who that enemy is.

For example—and indeed every word here is most directly practical—there are those amongst us who are spending much of their strength upon what they deem errors of opinion.

Do not suppose that I am indifferent to truth, or even to the most exact expression of Christian doctrine, if I say that a great part of such exertion is a waste of strength. It is the duty, no doubt, of Christian teachers to see that they use as correct a form of language in the exposition of the truths of Revelation as human infirmity will allow. And it is more especially the duty of writers upon such topics, and, most of all, of writers upon the doctrines of the gospel, to be anxiously careful in their choice of words, lest they either mar the beauty of the faith as once delivered to the saints, or cause difficulty and distress to the minds of those who may turn to them for instruction. But how different is all this from the practice of our own day in a Christian world! How are men made offenders for a word! How do hearers sit in judgment upon their teachers! How do reviewers fasten upon slips of expression, arising oftentimes out of candour, or else out of fervour; out of an earnestness to keep within the bounds of individual conviction, or else an earnestness to express forcibly to others some portion of the truth which is deeply felt within! This is a mistaking of our adversary.

But, again, we may mistake our adversary by a very common want of self-knowledge.

We all take it for granted that we know our own faults. We suppose it to be a matter of course that conscience reveals to us our chief deficiencies as Christians, and our chief inconsistencies, infirmities, and sins. And, where there is one very strong besetting sin in any of us, no doubt this is so. A man whose passions are strong, and who has suffered those passions to remain unchecked, can have no uncertainty as to the direction in which the power of evil points most strongly within. Where, on the other hand, the character has

been either less distinctly marked or more carefully watched and regulated, where the life has been kept pure from actual stain, and the supremacy of conscience from early days acknowledged and obeyed, it often happens that there is an almost entire ignorance of faults, patent to others, in the spirit and temper, and consequently an almost total misdirection of the efforts against evil which yet may be made, and made with some regularity and some earnestness. How often has some particular virtue been magnified, in such minds, into the whole of duty; the virtue, for example, of temperance, or of devotion, or of purity!

Thus, and not thus only, we may fight ineffectively by missing our real enemy.

2. But, yet once more, and finally, we may 'beat the air' in fighting, not by fighting with the wrong foe, but by fighting with the real foe wrongly.

Which of us has not done this? Which of us, that is, has not often been foiled in encountering his known, his real fault, his besetting sin? Which of us has not regretted, and resolved, and determined, yes, and prayed, against his chief sin, and yet fallen again before it as soon as it assailed him? This is sad, and wrong, and deeply discouraging: we ought to have strength, considering what a motive Christ has given us in His own death, considering what an Almighty helper Christ has promised to us in His Holy Spirit. It is for want of faith; for want of simply accepting what is simply offered; for want of really believing that there is a Holy Spirit given to all men for the asking: for want of believing this; because, if we did believe, we should certainly use it: it is for want of this that we thus fall, even when experience of sin, and sorrow for sin, and resolution against sin, and even prayer for victory over sin, has not been wholly wanting.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

Fasting.

I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. 1 CORINTHIANS ix. 27.

AS the strictness of Lent is a preparation for the joys of Easter, so the Church would not bring us all at once unprepared, upon that strictness, but, in the services of the three preceding Sundays, gives us notice of its approach, and, on the very first, gives us serious warning of our need of it. Discipline of the body is the subject of the epistle of to-day; suffering, with fasting, of the next; charity, wherewith alone austerity is acceptable, of the third. To-day an

Apostle sets forth, in himself, the necessity of self-affliction; on the next, his actual sufferings; on the last, the love wherewith, by God's gift, he so suffered. To-day, Apostolic awe of failure; then, Apostolic discipline and sufferings; lastly, Apostolic charity.

I. Since the Apostle did not deceive himself in thinking discipline necessary for himself, we, in this day, must be sorely deceiving ourselves, whosoever think it not necessary for us. We know that S. Paul was spiritual: what he spake, he spake by the Spirit of God; what he did, he did as one 'led by the Spirit;' when he went to suffer at Jerusalem, he went 'bound in the Spirit;' the words he spake, it was not he 'who spake, but the Spirit of the Father, Who dwelt in Him.' When then he, thus spiritual, relates in words thus given him by the Spirit, what that same Spirit taught him to do, as an ensample to us, we must have strange thoughts of ourselves and a different mind from that of the Spirit, as many as think these things 'carnal ordinances,' or that the spiritual life can be upheld or have soundness without them. Shall we, so poor in attainment as we mostly are, our prayers so languid, our love so cold, our alms-deeds so sparing, our bearing of the Cross so faint, not need, what he needed who had been in the third heaven, whose life was a 'longing to be dissolved and be with Christ,' whose death was but the completion of his sufferings in life, which made his life one death? We need this self-discipline indeed for different ends. They whom God has raised to the height of spirituality, are still beset by the same enemies as we; they are watched by the same Adversary; they tread on the high places of the earth, yet, on the very account of the height whereat they walk, they need the more humility, lest, looking below whereat they have attained, they turn dizzy. Satan's chief assaults are on *them*. Triumph over them, nay, their very stumbling or halting, were a more blasphemous joy to the Evil One than the perdition of those who struggle not. And so they need the same arms as we. But if they, so spiritualised, still, as being in the flesh, how much more such as we, whose victories it is to be feared have been so few, our defeats so manifold!

Fasting and self-discipline may seem in these days a long, toilsome, circuitous, unspiritual course; yet as it is the lowliest, and therefore likely to be truest, so it is the only way acknowledged by Holy Scripture. By self-indulgence Adam lost Paradise; by self-denial are we to regain that more blissful Paradise, which by suffering was purchased for us. For penitent or saint no other course is taught. 'Fasting, and weeping, and mourning' did God appoint, that he might 'return, and repent, and leave a blessing behind him.'

By fasting only with prayer were even Apostles enabled to prevail against some 'kind' of devils; amid fasting were Apostles separated

to carry on their warfare against Satan's kingdom: by fastings, as by other suffering, no less than 'by pureness, by knowledge, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God,' does S. Paul testify that he approved himself as a minister of God. And what should we dare to say of our Blessed Lord's own Fast? Our Church rightly counts it among the Merciful Mysteries of His Life, as well as the Temptation for which it prepared, and beseeches Him 'by Thy Fasting and Temptation,' 'have mercy upon us.' Strange mystery, that it should be fitting that His sinless nature should suffer through fasting, the appointed means to discipline our rebellious appetites, or humble ourselves for their rebellion! Strange that when God in Him so consecrated fasting, man should not think *that* a privilege, which was hallowed in his Master and Redeemer! Strange the spotless Son entered into temptation through fasting, we, sin-stained as we are, impure from our mother's womb, and defiled with all our own added transgressions, should think *that* needless for us, whereby the Ever-Blessed Son, as Man, was perfected! Strange that when all, saints and sinners, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, righteous kings, leaders of God's heritage, types of the great Mediator, yea, and that Mediator Himself, employed fasting as acceptable with God, persons in this day should think they might neglect or despise it, as a carnal and unprofitable service! Strange would it indeed be, were there anything strange in Satan's wiles or man's self-deceit!

II. Think not these things valueless or irksome. Ye will be tempted to both. Try them and ye will find them neither, but gladness and a blessing. It is the very character of the gospel to change everything, to sanctify everything, brighten everything. For the Spirit of God sheds over everything His holiness and light; the blood of Christ purifies our dross and makes it gold, imparts to our worthlessness its own inestimable value. The cross of Christ changes all it touches. It brought in life for death, holiness for sin, heaven for hell, the love of God for Almighty wrath. How shall it not change all besides? It makes weakness strength; sorrow, joy; fasting, a feast; sickness, health; weariness, rest; suffering, gladness; loss of all things, to win Christ; loneliness, the Redeemer's presence; poverty, riches; darkness, light; humiliation, honour; contempt, glory; our broken offerings, acceptable service; petty self-denials, angelic crowns. For it enables us to love Him who first loved us, and to those who love Him makes all things an earnest of His love, all partaking of His Cross health and life. It drops life-giving blood from that Sacred Side on every sorrow borne patiently, and taken willingly, as His gift to His penitent disciples. It gives our blind and maimed sacrifices, if the best which we can offer, some portion of

that death of value infinite, which gives life and value to all which lives and loves.

Only, while too many neglect all fasting, of body and soul, let us beware that in the humiliation of the body, we fail not to mortify the soul. Fasting, especially in its revival, has its own snares and trials. Satan would make the very means of grace a hindrance. To some few he might give high thoughts, as though it were some great thing; more he might make ashamed of what is Christ's Cross. He can use against us the weakness of our body, as well as its strength, disappoint us, as though we reaped no spiritual profit, or elate us at what we think we have; employ our weakness to irritate the flesh, which in the end it subdues, rouse the evil tempers, which in the end by God's grace it mortifies, distract us in the prayers, which in the end it wings.

Our remedy is, to wait in patience on our God. Do we do it not as some great thing, but as a simple duty, and we shall not think much of ourselves or be disturbed by the reproaches of others.

For forty days thy Saviour was for thee in one unbroken fast, 'with the wild beasts' in the wilderness, and tempted of the devil. Strive thou, for forty days, against any one sin, using what strictness thou mayest, and by His grace, thou wilt receive of Him a power thou knewest not before; thou wilt know, in thy degree, 'the fellowship of His sufferings,' and wilt be conformed to His death; thou wilt 'know Him and the power of His resurrection.' Thou wilt know what His might is, for thou wilt know what it is, earnestly and with perseverance, to desire that His might be put forth in thee and for thee; thou wilt have followed Him like the blind man on the way, and have cried after Him, and He who taught thee that cry will hear thee, and say to thee, 'Be it unto thee as thou wilt.'

E. B. PUSEY.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL.

The Life of Christianity.

For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. . . . And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard. S. MATTHEW XX. 1, 6, 7.

PIPHANY is past, the season of sudden lights flashing in unawares. Rapid glimpses, kindling insight—these are the signals that a new thing has been born in the world; the earth heaves in her sleep, the stars have stirrings, the pulses of human life are quickened; there is a movement felt of quivering expectation; wise men from afar break in with abrupt questionings; students poring over divine law in the Temple courts lift their eyes to the touch of a new world; men and women at the wedding feast are caught in the flush of an unknown joy! So Epiphany speaks to us each year. We, too, again and again at such a time are allowed to catch sight of all the possibilities that were opened to us by the birth of Christ. We are startled by glimpses here and there into the things that might be, the vision strikes us again with a sense of hidden glory held in reserve, of powers that move behind the veil—the door is unshut, the window is flung open, blinding light from beyond breaks in.

That is Epiphany. It is the time for us to enlarge our horizons, to quicken our insight, to look for omens, for the gleam of the northern lights; it is the time to treasure up all such moments of sudden benediction that may be given to us, a time to lay hold of them and to nurse them in the memory, to store them up for dark days. We shall want them; we shall want them all to keep life sweet, to heighten our measure of things, to feed our hope when the wheels drag heavy.

But Epiphany is gone, and to-day, with a rapid turn, our eyes are, as it were, shaken off this high vision of God's splendour, and the whole strength of the light is cast upon ourselves. 'All very well,' it says, 'these far glimpses, these swift touches of the glory of God, these secrets that there be between you and the hidden powers behind the veil; what are you yourself going to do? How are you going to begin? Now to-day, what will you be at?' The veil has been lifted in vain at Epiphany if the swift passing of the glory has left you only

languishing regret. The sudden splendour was shown that it might sting you into action; it was given that it might be impossible for you to sit still and do nothing. If you have had a glimpse of the secret, how can it be that you are standing here all the day idle? That is the challenge of Septuagesima.

Idleness is a crime against the Christian conscience, against the laws of the kingdom, and is for several reasons peculiarly anti-Christian, which reasons it may be worth while to consider.

I. First, Idleness defeats the object of the Kingdom here on earth, for that Kingdom is come here to sift and test us for our place in its further development hereafter, and that place is determined by one decisive standard—character—and character is evoked and proved and established only under the pressure of work; character discloses itself in face of obligations that it has to satisfy, tasks that it must fulfil, responsibilities that it is bound to face. Have you patience, perseverance, unselfishness, tenacity, dutifulness, worth, courage, confidence, virtue? The idle man does not know; he has never been put to proof; he has never had occasion to try his nerve, or his steadiness of purpose, or his rectitude, or his equity; no stress has been brought upon him; he has never undergone fatigue or anxiety, never been brought up in a sharp school; he has thrown away the whole use of earth, he has passed through no probation, he stands there at heaven's gate, and what, in God's name, is to be done with him?

II. Again, idleness is a sin against love. Love perishes in inactivity; it cannot be love and not be busy, for love is the energy of service, it exists only in ministering; love must go out of itself and spend itself in labour for others—only in work can it breathe freely and move in gladness. And God is love. And God therefore is the energy of work; God is the great workman.

III. Idleness is a sin against God; and once more idleness is a sin against the body of Christ, the body of the new manhood, of which the brotherhood of believers is the realised pledge of that prophetic first-fruit. In Christ we are all recognised as members one of another, through membership in Him who wore the flesh of all. If one member is idle, all feel it; his debt, due to the general well-being, is unpaid; his sluggishness is a weight of which others feel the burden; his vacant office costs additional effort elsewhere to compensate for it; he keeps some channel choked, he takes in from others and gives back nothing; he is spending the strength of the body which is bound to carry him along, and yet turns it to waste, since it wins to men no profit. He is therefore the germ of ill health, he makes for the death of the body, for the body has its life in activity, in exercise, in effort, and against all these his idleness works for poison, as a disease.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

There is one thing asked for—just work; work that lays some stress upon the character and so proves its weakness and its worth; work that may indeed be disappointing in its results by the mischances of life, or by the weakness of the doer, but yet shall have achieved the true inner purpose in testing the will, the perseverance, the patience, the determination, the cheerfulness, the virtue, of him or her who by the mere fact of working, though they have failed to win the fruit of their toil—yes, and may have failed through their own infirmities, nevertheless are justified in that they have discharged their responsibility towards Christ and His Kingdom, and have shown themselves, by the efforts they have spent, to be at least striving to follow the example of the Father who worketh hitherto.

H. SCOTT HOLLAND.

The Labourers in the Vineyard.

The kingdom of God is like unto a man which is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. S. MATTHEW XX. 1.

WE are all familiar with the text of the remarkable parable which begins with these words, though few of us, probably, could give a thoroughly satisfactory explanation of it. The householder hires his labourers, some at sunrise, some three hours later, some at midday, some in the full glow of afternoon, and some just an hour before sunset. He agrees with the first to pay them a fixed sum for their labour—a penny a day—but the rest, and let us mark this (for we might easily fail to notice the point), the rest, I say, are hired without any definite agreement as to what they are to receive. At sunset he bids his steward pay them their wages; and the last as well as the first receive the same piece of money. All are paid the penny or denarius—answering to about ninepence of our money—the daily wages of a soldier or artisan. Those who have worked all day murmur at being thus put on a level with those who have worked but one hour, and are rebuked for their grudging spirit. So (we are told) the last shall be first, and the first last.

I. The general lesson is clear that we are no fit judges of God's dealings with ourselves or with others; and that a grudging, grasping spirit especially will be rebuked by Him. To enforce this rebuke was, it would seem, the chief object of the parable. S. Peter had seen the rich young man go away with downcast sullen face, unable to make up his mind to the great sacrifice which our Lord demanded of him. Our Saviour had bidden him 'Go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven,' and his faith was too weak to respond to that test. Then S. Peter catches at

the words 'thou shalt have treasure in heaven,' and asks what shall be the reward of himself and his brethren who (as he thinks) *have* followed the counsel of perfection, and *have* given up all for Jesus. Then answered Peter and said unto Him, 'Behold, we have forsaken all and followed Thee, what shall we have therefore?' The purport of his question was, it seems, to gain a clearer idea of the wages in store for Christ's disciples, and it may be to bind his Master by a sort of compact to give them a full reward. Our Lord does not wholly reprove the question. He gives a sketch of the blessings which will surely be given to those who have denied themselves for His sake and the gospel's. But He joins these promises with a warning as contained in this parable. S. Peter seems still to be under the influence of the Pharisaical view which looks upon God as bound by a covenant of works—as promising so many blessings, earthly and heavenly, in return for so much good work done by those who have contracted to serve Him. Peter then must learn from the parable, and we must learn with him, that those who serve for reward will be paid their reward and nothing more. We must not murmur at the Lord's generosity to others with whom He has made no compact, and who have entered His service in general reliance upon His character. If we murmur or grumble we shall receive the stipulated wages, but coupled with a severe rebuke, and possibly a sentence of dismissal from further employment. 'Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last even as unto thee.'

Clearly then, those who make no bargain, and who depend wholly on the Master's goodness, will not suffer by their confidence, while those who make a bargain, and treat life in His service as a matter of business, will be in danger of being placed last in His Kingdom, and perhaps wholly turned away from working any more for Him.

II. But beyond this great lesson there is another which seems very suitable to the frame and tone of mind in which many of us find ourselves—with our hearts stirred to look about for remedies for some of the social troubles of our times. Let us look for a moment at the Master's side of the parable, not at that of the servants.

This is by no means the only parable in which our Lord represents Himself as dealing with money, and as an employer and rewarder of labour. It is so in the parables of the Pounds and the Talents, and to some extent in that of the Wicked Husbandman, as well as elsewhere. May we not see in this a consecration of the ordinary business of life, and a call to do it in the spirit in which He represents Himself as acting? Not only did our Lord consecrate the life of manual labour by working as a carpenter, and the seafaring life by making His home with the fishers of the Lake of Galilee—but He consecrated the life of the husbandmen and the keeper of sheep by calling Him-

self the Sower and the Good Shepherd—and so by these parables which touch on the use of money He has opened another and a higher ideal of the life of employers of labour to those who are masters and not actual workers with their hands.

There has been from time to time, in this as well as in other countries, a tendency to look at what we call 'business'—that is, at the various forms of trade, or commerce, or manufacture—either as callings unfit for a man of liberal education, or as implying and justifying the adoption of a set of mean and selfish principles.

The first of these difficulties has been, as we are all aware, to a great extent removed. The barriers of class are being broken down, and on the whole with very great benefit to us all. But the second difficulty to a great extent still remains. It is too often taken for granted that when a man adopts a life of business, instead of one of the more learned professions, he leaves behind him his higher aspirations, and looks only to success and money-making as his object. It is not so in other employments, at least not to the same extent. Not to speak of the clerical office, which is, of course, exceptional—a physician is esteemed for the lives he saves, for the pain he alleviates, and the discoveries he makes which are of use to all the world. An advocate is valued for the keenness of his intelligence, and the support he gives to his clients; a judge for contentment which he affords to suitors in his court; a solicitor for the honesty and solidity of his advice; a teacher for the accuracy of his scholarship, and his power of imparting knowledge and training character. But it is far too common to rate a man of business mainly by his success—provided he has done nothing clearly dishonest. He may treat his work-people and underlings as bodies without souls; he may never increase their wages in times of prosperity; he may neglect or possibly oppose the interests of his country, and even of his own neighbourhood, yet if he make a large fortune, people are apt to think and call him a great man.

Now there is clearly no sufficient reason why this should be so—why high motives and aims should be attached to some vocations in life and not to others, provided that they are innocent and useful, as the life of a man of business clearly is.

It is true that the type of character which is necessary in a successful merchant or manufacturer is exposed to certain temptations and to the rapid development of certain faults, unless it be controlled by a strong and healthy conscience. Such a man must have a weighing, calculating, far-seeing spirit, and an insight into the weak side of human nature, its arbitrary whims and fancies, as well as its ordinary guiding motives, whether noble or mean. Such a man must be prompt to take advantage of opportunities, to seize (as it is called)

the turns of the market. He must not be over-sensitive or foolishly scrupulous. And again, while he is quick to see his own opportunity, he must be prepared against unfair dealing on the part of others, whether competitors or servants in his employment. He must keep his own counsel and beware of betraying his own secrets. He must entertain a just and reasonable amount of suspicion or caution in all his dealings. He must have a governing mind and make his will felt in every part of his own concerns. A certain isolation and reserve is essential to such a man; and this is a character which may easily degenerate into closeness and meanness within and sharpness and harshness without.

We cannot certainly urge any but men of high principle to enter into such a career. Nothing can be more dangerous than such a life for a weak, kindly, but irresolute man, without fixed notions of right and wrong, without constant self-control, and without energy to assert what is right. But there is no reason at all why men possessed of ordinary strength of character should not find in such a life the best and largest openings for serving God—supposing that He has by any external signs or internal promptings called them to it.

We can make it a point of conscience not to look upon our earnings and savings as merely mechanical means for producing so much interest and increase in the future, but as a trust from God to infuse more of morality and responsibility into commercial life. I do not suggest any hazardous experiments in philanthropy. Men of small incomes have no right to endanger their future solvency and usefulness by plunging into well-meant schemes for the guidance of which they have little or no aptitude. But it does seem to be a Christian duty to hallow *all* our undertakings, and to be faithful even in that which is least.

It is a duty also to study the great problem suggested by the equal penny of the parable. It is not the chimerical attempt to make all men equal that this parable seems to set before us as an ideal, but an attempt which is surely *not chimerical*, to secure to every man who is willing to work a sufficiency of absolute necessaries. We ought not to rest until we have secured for such men light and air and water, food and sleep, work and recreation in sufficient measure for a healthy life.

Laws have already been made in the German Empire by which the labourer is ensured against sickness and accident. A still greater project is now in hand in that country for providing a pension for old age, partly out of workman's wages, partly out of the funds of the employers, partly out of the taxes of the state. Scarcely any internal social experiment of greater importance has ever been taken in hand since the establishment of the poor laws in this country. If

the scheme should be adopted it will certainly be our duty to consider its working closely and keenly, and to examine its possible adaptation to the different conditions of life among ourselves.

The degradation of the workhouse life is, I believe, universally felt —except by the most hardened—by our labouring poor. The workhouse may be usefully retained as an infirmary, and as a sort of voluntary prison for wandering beggars, but it has no useful function for the able-bodied in temporary distress. Let us not rest until we find something to take its place by which the workman may be aided without feeling that he has lost his self-respect—while yet he recognises that he is kindly and tenderly dealt with as one of the children of the state which God has given it. BISHOP WORDSWORTH.

The Labourers in the Lord's Vineyard.

For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard, etc. S. MATT. XX. 1-16.

THE labourers in the Lord's vineyard.—In accordance with the direction of our text, we will turn our attention, first, to their calling; second, to their reward.

I. Among the numerous types by which Holy Scripture represents the kingdom of heaven, there is probably none more significant than that of the vineyard. We remember the words of our Saviour, which He spoke to His disciples (S. John xv. 5), 'I am the vine, ye are the branches'; and just before, in verse 1, 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.' This one true vine, in its countless branches, believers in Him, would extend itself over the earth, and transform it into a beautiful and fruitful vineyard. The case is thus represented in our gospel. We see in it a householder, the possessor and protector of an extensive vineyard, and we perceive clearly that under the type of this vineyard the Kingdom of Heaven is intended. That is one point from which this type is a particularly suitable designation for the Kingdom of Heaven. But it requires our attention from another point of view. A vineyard requires much care, anxiety, and work. 'Every branch in me,' says our Saviour, 'that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.' Therefore in a vineyard there is at all times much to do—to dig round the roots, to prune and purge the stems, and to graft fresh branches in the place of the old ones. It is the same in the kingdom of God. What trouble and labour a single soul costs before it can be placed pure and blameless before the presence of God!

'An householder went out early in the morning to hire labourers

into his vineyard.' He Himself, the Lord, comes and calls us into His vineyard; proposes to us Himself that we should devote ourselves to His service. In various ways He calls us, in the words, 'My son, give Me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe My ways.' He disguises His call in every voice which sounds so sweetly in our ears, and thus He makes a way into our hearts. And early in the morning He goes out to call us, exactly as our text tells us, as soon as the day of our life has dawned; soon after the first cock-crowing He goes out to summon us to His work.

Let us not overlook this feature in the parable. 'The householder saw others standing idle in the market-place,' it is said. If we, with the eye of God, could look down upon the proceedings of this life, how startled we should be at the host of idlers in the midst of the turmoil of life! The Lord sees clearly that which our merely human understanding can also perceive, that there is only one activity upon earth which is really activity, because it produces a real result —activity for the kingdom of God and in His service. Every other effort of human strength, if it has not a decided reference to the kingdom of God, and finds in it its source as well as its aim, is only a busy idleness, a sad and mournful unreality, with which the prince of this world detains in its prison those who have fallen into its unhappy slavery. Every other activity which does not build, only destroys, and the more noble the power is which calls it forth the more destructive is its working, until at last it destroys itself.

Will the Lord's patience extend further with the obstinate labourers? I see a great multitude who, while the sun is sinking still nearer the horizon, are standing idle in the market-place; they always thought that a work more remunerative, more comfortable, more in conformity with their wishes, would certainly be found for them. But in vain; they now look back upon their useless lives, which are rich only in recollections of their follies. They have pursued for a long time a thousand false works in their folly; nothing but fatigue was their reward. Now they acknowledge that on the whole face of the earth there is but one true master, the householder and Lord of the vineyard. They are languishing in the heat of the day without eating or drinking; for only One has the bread and water of life, and His call they despised. Ah, how willingly many would follow Him, if He would once more raise His voice. And behold, 'about the eleventh hour (five o'clock in the evening) he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?' They may well have felt the overwhelming importance of this rebuking question. 'They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.' Thus

the Lord calls labourers into His vineyard; from the early morning until late in the evening, as long as it is still day, no hour is too late for Him to go out to call souls and to receive them. Not only once, but countless times has He called every single soul. Every one must blame himself alone if the blessing of labouring in the vineyard is lost to him.

II. A special blessing and reward is then awaiting this work? Unquestionably. Eternal happiness, eternal peace, everlasting life in communion with the Saviour, and, through Him, with the Father, is the certain reward of the faithful labourers in God's vineyard. There is often in this life very little to be felt outwardly of this especial reward and happiness, but wait until the burden and heat of the day is over. A cool evening will certainly come on, in which the householder will say to His steward, 'Call the labourers, and give them their hire.' Every one then receives a reward, even the latest who came into the work an hour before sunset. But how will the Lord make a gradation in the reward, according to the longer or shorter time in which the labourers have worked? They are already surprised that He says to the steward, 'Give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.' There is not a word about a difference of reward according to the different proportions of work. Let us listen further. 'And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.' It is one and the same reward which they all receive; there is only one reward for an immortal soul, the love and communion of God their Saviour, and the Sabbath rest with Him in the evening of this troubled day of life.

But no, we are mistaken. All the labourers in God's vineyard do not get the same reward. What does our parable say further? 'And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house.' That long and hard work, which they looked upon as an established claim for a greater reward, deprived them of any reward at all. They appear to have gone into the vineyard with the idea that they must earn their reward; for with them, and with them alone, it is expressly asserted that the Lord agreed concerning the day's hire. And this unhappy fundamental error of self-righteousness changed everything which might have been a blessing to them—their outward industry and faithfulness in their work—into a curse. It was quite different with those who came later. They did not think of bargaining with the Lord; they had no doubt of His abundant goodness, and still less of His general and outspoken assurance: 'Whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.' They did not seek a reward, but 'the Lord was their shield, and exceeding

great reward.' They do not build at all upon their merits and their industry, but only on the undeserved mercy of the householder, and they received immeasurably more than they hoped, or thought themselves worthy of. But in this way alone were they capable of being used in the Lord's service in His vineyard, whilst the work of the first labourers was only outward. For faith and love, which alone can profit in the kingdom of God, were wanting in them.

R. ROTHE.

God calleth Thee.

And about the eleventh hour, He went out and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. S. MATTHEW XX. 6, 7.

THE parables of our Blessed Lord, as indeed all Holy Scripture, have manifold meanings, so that we cannot say, because it means this, it does not mean that, or because it means that, it does not mean this. For all its meanings are parts of His one meaning, who spake it, whose wisdom, as Himself, is infinite. Rather, the several meanings which we see, are like the colours of His bow of mercy, one hue differing from another, yet all, portions of His one light, unfolded from it, returning into it, seen separately, yet really inseparable; shown us apart, that gazing upon them, one by one, we may see what, as a whole, we could not look upon; each reflecting to us some attribute of His mercy or His love. And of these several meanings two are everywhere very marked and plain; what relates to the Church as a whole, or to each single soul in it. And in the whole teaching of a parable, some will belong most to the Church, some to the single soul; as in the Psalms which prophesy of our Lord Himself, some parts belong mostly to Himself, the head; some, in Him, to us His members.

I. The two great meanings of the parable of to-day's gospel comprise, the one, the whole race of mankind, who have been called by God, from Abel to the end, the other, single souls, one by one. And of these, the larger, the Church, in fact enfolds the other, the history of her single members. The history of God's dealings with the whole body is repeated in each single soul. He loves and cares for each single soul, as He doth the whole race of men and angels. Parts then of the parable belong equally to both; others more especially to the one or to the other. Thus, in both, by amazing condescension, Almighty God, the Maker of heaven and earth, vouchsafes to call Himself a householder, Father of one great family, watching over

them, giving them their appointed tasks, promising them their rewards. In both the vineyard is His one Church, wherein each, teacher and taught, has his own allotted office, every member, which, 'according to the grace that is given' it of God, performeth that office aright, first or last, is God's instrument to His own glory and the wellbeing of the whole. Every one who, by that grace, cleanseth his own soul from the weeds of sin is as really and truly a labourer in it, after his measure, as S. Paul, who by the grace that was given him, brought Jew and Greek to 'obedience to the faith.' And the reward is in both the same, 'the penny,' which bore the image of the King who giveth it. And what, then, is this reward but that whereof S. John speaketh, 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him.' It is the likeness of God Himself, traced now faintly upon the believing soul, on those whom He maketh sons of God, yet then given fully, when they shall behold Him 'face to face,' and receive and reflect that unspeakable glory whereon they shall be admitted to gaze in love.

Parts again of the parable, although true of both the whole Church and one single soul, have their fuller meaning as to the one or the other. Thus those words, 'We have borne the burden and heat of the day' can be said more fully of souls who have given the springtide also of life, their first and best, to God, and ever borne His yoke upon them, although they are true also of the faithful in those elder generations, before Christ came in the flesh, in that the law was a heavier burthen to them, and they had not so much the fulness of the refreshing, abiding, indwelling presence of Christ to sustain them. On the other hand, the excuse of those who stood idle, 'Because no man hath hired us,' is more fully true of those to whom the gospel of Christ was or is for the first time preached than it can be of us. We must know full well of ourselves that we have been oftentimes called, recalled, re-recalled. We were called at our baptism, by instruction in our childhood, through parents or God's ministers, by the prayers we were taught, our confirmation, our first communion, the early drawings of our inmost souls, terrors, warnings, hopes, deaths of others or of those beloved, our own sickness, God's pleadings in our consciousness, the emptiness and weariness of things present, thoughts of eternity and judgment to come, the loathsomeness of sin, the beauty of holiness, the bright light in others, the innocence of children, the sweepings by of time, thoughts of the blissful company of heaven, or of the dreadful fellowship of devils.

If we would hear, surely we might rather say that God calls us at all times, in all places, by all things, persons, deeds, words, by night and by day, all our lives long, than dare to say for ourselves before

God's all-searching eye, 'No man hath hired us.' For so it is; when persons have heard the first call everything calls them. When the heart is awake every, the lowest, whisper calls it. When it is alive to God, every work of God, every gift of God, every grace of God, in it or in others, everything done for or against God, every forgetfulness of God, every coarse or idle word it hears, every hard or thoughtless look it sees, calls it anew to God. For when that one thought, 'heaven or hell for ever,' for ever the blissful presence, or the loss of the face of God, everlasting love or everlasting hate, is, by God's Holy Spirit, wrought into the soul, everything may bring it back and forth in us; everything of sense or spirit may call us out of and above this world of sense, up to its Maker, the Father of all spirits and all flesh, our God.

The world is one great mirror. As we are who look into it or on it, so is it to us. It gives us back ourselves. It speaks to us the language of our own hearts. Such as we are, so doth it speak to us of pleasure, gain, honour, vanity, worldly happiness, or of everlasting rest and peace, out of itself, in God. Our inmost self is the key to all.

Everything preaches eternity to the awakened soul. All love of gain it sees, preaches of Him, the true riches; all disquiet 'about many things,' of Him, our only rest; all seeking after pleasures, of Him, the ever-flowing torrent of pleasure; all sickness of soul and body, of Him, our soul's only health; all things passing, of Him who alone abideth. Perhaps no place may more preach to the soul the vanity of all things beneath the sun, and the verity of Him, the eternal verity, whose and of whom are all things, as the vast solitude of the great, crowded, tumultuous city, 'full of stirs,' where 'all things are full of labour; man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing,' where well-nigh all countenances or motions are full of eagerness, anxiety; all bent on something, seeking, but finding not, because they are seeking all things out of God, all but Himself, except when, here and there, they at last become very emptiness, because they know no more what to seek or find, but have lost themselves.

II. God promises not to us, as to those first labourers, a certain hire. Even while He would wholly restore us, in His mercy, He would keep in us the humility of penitents. He seemeth to tell us thus that we have forfeited our claim, that we must labour on in faith, and hope, and confiding trust, making no bargains, as it were, with Him, looking for nothing again but what He of His free bounty will give us. But so will He give us, not what we could dare to ask or think, but 'what is right'; not 'right' with regard to us, or any poor claims or demerits of ours, but right in His sight, whose 'mercy is over all His works,' right for Him who 'doth what He

will with His own,' who is not stinted to any measure of proportion, but giveth us out of the largeness of His love; not 'what is right' for us, but for Him in whose right we receive what we deserve not, even His, who gave up that which was His right by nature, and 'emptied Himself,' that, what is His right, we might receive. This is our very hope and trust and gladness in our toil, that we labour, not with any calculating spirit, or to set up for ourselves any claim with God; the rewards of desert were finite; the reward of grace is infinite, even Himself, who hath said, 'I am thine exceeding great reward.'

III. Yet, often as He calleth us, He calleth us by an ever present call. He goeth indeed far beyond His promise in His word, or His deeds even, when He Himself dwelt among us. Then we hear not of a second call. We hear no more even of one whom Jesus once loved, who had done much for duty to God, but who, when called nearer to Him, and to higher fellowship with Christ, the sharing of His poverty and His Cross, though sorrowful, still went away from Him. We hear nothing of labourers who, being called, refused; we are not told that those called at the eleventh hour had been before called, at the third, sixth, ninth, and had refused; or that any who drew back, having been called, were again called. Much less is an eleventh hour promised to those who refuse to hear now. 'Now is the day of salvation.' There is a last hour of grace to the soul; no one knows when! We must never despair of it for others; we must ever act ourselves as if it were our last now. We know not what we may not forfeit, when we hold back from any call to greater strictness, or deeper inwardness, or to sit looser to the world, or part with its hopes or pleasures, or draw closer to our Redeemer's side or to His Cross. We know not whether we may not forfeit all, even our own souls. It is thought to have been shown to one dear to our Lord, where she would have been in hell, had she not obeyed the drawings of His grace. We risk all. Obey we, though trembling, and we know not what future calls may not be wrapped up in that one call, what store of grace may not lie, pledged to us, in that one grace; what treasures of the love of God may not be opened to us, by receiving into our souls that love, wherewith He now draweth us. Draw we back, and we know not into what depth of unlove, nay, into what depth of sin and hell we might not sink! For what may not be comprised in that one word, 'If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.'

E. B. PUSEY.

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

The Fewness of the Saved.

Many be called, but few chosen. S. Matthew xx. 16.

THESE words of our blessed Lord do give the intensest awe and pain of any in Holy Scripture; at least, they render what Holy Scripture says of eternal punishment most fearful, and bring it most near ourselves. For they cut at the root of the very comfort, wherewith so many delude their souls, that God cannot mean to punish so great a multitude; that they are no worse than most besides; have done no more harm; not wasted their talents more; not been more irreligious, or impure, or careless than their neighbours. The poor, who speak most honestly, draw out this in words; they tell you plainly this is their ground of hope. But is it not that of all who are not in deep earnest about their souls?

What does lie at the root of all men's intense serving of self, and this forgetfulness of God, but a deep, fixed persuasion that God cannot mean to be what they think so severe; that He cannot really intend to destroy so many: that although God Himself has said, 'Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil,' it must be safe to be with the multitude? And they will bear themselves out by a bold praise of God, as though God would 'accept flattering words'; and men who know not what real love is, who never thought of God so as to love Him, and could scarcely pretend that they know what it is to love Him, or that they ever felt it, will say that so heavy dealings are contrary to the love of God. It is but a few steps further to deny that hell will last for ever, or to deny hell altogether. The principle is the same. It is just as hard to conceive of one soul, or Satan himself, lost for ever, as to believe that any number will, however miserably large.

I. It is one of those deep mysteries which will never be understood, save in heaven, in the light and love of Almighty God. For it may be that in hell it will be part of the misery of the damned still to rebel against the justice of God, as here against His love and righteous will. One only difficulty there is, of which all the rest are but offshoots, 'Whence is evil amid the works of an All-Good, All-Wise God?' And if man, living in this corner of the creation, bounded in his understanding, looking but a little way along a little space, be not humble enough to say, 'I cannot know, God has not revealed it,' there is nothing before him but to say with the fool, 'There is no God.' If we shrink back from this, as we must, and believe, and know, and confess, and glory, and think in our inmost souls, that, be this how it may (we know not, need not to know,

cannot know now, wish not to know), since we know this which alone concerns us, that God is very good to us, then we shall go on, and with the Psalmist 'praise God in His holiness,' for 'His mercy is over all His works,' although we understand not His dealing with any of them.

There are but two resting-places in the whole range of thought about God; the one a loving, implicit, child-like faith, which, although it understands not, believes every word of God, because it loves Him, and bends not the thoughts of God to be as its thoughts, but yields and casts down its every thought to be obedient to the thoughts of God; the other, entire unbelief, which ends in dethroning God, making God a part of the world, and itself a part of God. All else is only moving in the one way or the other.

II. What is the state of things among us? By the tender mercy of our God we may hope that He who hath given the beginning will carry on His work. But, at the very best, we are awakening out of a dreary, heavy sleep. What deadly sin is not well-nigh rife among us? Where are most human souls, there is God least. Where are most souls to be saved, there is every form of death. Where all tempts to hell, there are fewest to call men to escape it. And this is repeated in every crowded city in our land! Our wealth, as a nation, is, as far as depends on us, 'the price of blood.' Every plan for increasing it exposes men the more to sin, severs them from the Church and all means of grace and the very knowledge of Christ, to be taught, schooled, tended, possessed by Satan!

And we ourselves, if God have kept us, or anew called us, what is our past at its best mostly, but calls half-heard or half-obeyed, endless short-comings, 'standing idle in the market-place,' if not wasting His vineyard? If, through His undeserved mercy, we be saved in the end, are we not, mostly, but the wrecks of what we might have been, gaining the shore after shipwreck on some 'broken pieces of the ship,' the plank of repentance, so that even of the saved it will be true, 'Many be called, but few chosen' to those higher degrees of glory and bliss to which, had they faithfully obeyed His 'call,' He would have 'chosen' them. Amid all these countless forms of death, where is life? Must we not say with the Prophet, 'The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.' So that men have taken comfort that half the human race dies before it can well know actual sin, and that so many are 'taken from the evil to come,' before they can destroy themselves.

At a distance self-denial seems hard, for thou seest its outer form, and canst not know how they who deny self gain the presence of God. It seems hard to part with things of time, yet only until thou knowest how God replaces them with foretastes of heaven. To fast

seems hard, yet only till thou know how God satisfieth the hungry soul. The way of life seems a lonely way, but only till thou know how to the lonely Christ places Himself by their side. Hard is it to part with this life's destructive sweetnesses, but only till thou know the sweetness of the heavenly manna, wherewith God feeds the inmost soul of those who choose Him. Hard is it to cross our own will, but only till we know the rest and peace of having no will but only His. Trust thyself really and wholly but the few first earnest steps along the narrow way, and, by God's grace, thou wilt never leave it; trust thyself with Him who first (as at the holy season whereon we are entering) trod it for thee, and He will smooth it to thee. Blessed will it be there to tread where are the footmarks of thy Redeemer. Blessed there to tread where the enemy shall have no power to hurt thee; but He will 'give thee power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and all the power of the enemy.' Blessed is he there, where thy footsteps shall not, as thou goest, gather the mire of this earth, but shall be washed with the blood of Him who tracked the way for thee; blessed to be where thou shalt be borne on His arms, rest thine aching head on His bosom, hear within thee His guiding voice, and all thine own emotions be quelled and quieted by His peace.

E. B. PUSEY.

The Labourers in the Vineyard.

S. Matt. xx. 1-16 (with Genesis i.).

I. The parable of the labourers in the vineyard (S. Matthew xx. 1-16).

(*a*) Exposition.

In this parable there are eight necessary parts. First, the householder, whom most explain to be God, whose is the vine, and of whom Christ says, 'My Father is the husbandman': and as God everywhere in the prophets calls His people His vine.

Second, the day, in the morning of which the householder came forth into the market-place, and in the evening of which he paid the wages to the workmen. Most take this to be the whole of time, which is interposed between the beginning of the world and the end. By the evening the time of the last judgment is meant, by the morning the beginning of the world.

The third part is the vineyard, which some interpret as the righteousness and commands of God, which men are called to obey. Some (as Athanasius) the whole world; others, each man's soul, which he is bidden to cultivate well; others, the Church. And this last is the most probable.

The fourth is the hour; first, third, sixth, ninth, and eleventh. The authors who take the whole day to have been the entire duration of the world, say that the first hour was from Adam to Noah; the third, from Noah to Abraham; the sixth, from Abraham to Moses; the ninth, from Moses to Christ; the eleventh, from Christ unto the end of the world—which S. John seems to allude to when he says, 'It is the last time (ἐσχάτη ὥρα) the last hour' (1 S. John ii. 18).

Others understand the various hours to be the various ages of each man; the first hour, infancy; the third, youth; the sixth, manhood; the ninth, declining age; the eleventh, decrepitude. For some are called from their first infancy, and even from their mother's womb, as Samuel, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, and others at other ages. . . . But I do not think that we ought particularly to inquire what is meant by the sixth, ninth, or eleventh hour, lest we should seem to restrict too narrowly the bearing of the parable.

The fifth is the market-place, into which the householder is said to have gone forth to hire labourers; by which Origen and others rightly understood the whole world, which is without the Church, in which all men are either idle or are busied in secular occupations; and are called thence into the Church as into a vineyard.

The sixth, the denarius which is given to all, and by which it is not doubtful that salvation and eternal life is signified. Why signified by a denarius? Because, answers Irenæus, the denarius has the image of the sovereign, and those who shall be saved become 'conformed to the image of the Son of God' (Romans viii. 29), as S. Paul says; and again, 'He shall change the body of our humility, that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory' (Philippians iii. 21).

The seventh is the even, when the denarius is paid, which no one doubts to be the end of the world, and the time of declaring the last judgment.

The eighth is, that the householder bids to begin the payment with those who came last; to this the meaning of the parable chiefly belongs. The signification is easy; for the last are preferred and become first, because they have laboured as much in one hour as others in the whole day.

II. The work of creation (Genesis i. 26). Note here (1) The mystery of the Holy Trinity—'Let us make man.'

2. Note also the excellency of man. 'For God here seems to deliberate and consult concerning the creation of man, as of a great work.'

3. The purpose of creation. 'As God made the world on account of man, so He made man for Himself, as it were, the high priest of the Temple of God; the spectator of His works and of heavenly

things. For it is he alone who, being thoughtful and capable of reason, is able to recognise God, to admire His works, His holiness and power. Therefore he alone has received the gift of speech, and a tongue, the interpreter of thought, that he may be able to set forth the glory of his Lord.'

4. The Creation bears witness to God, its author.

S. J. EALES.

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS.

The Work of Creation.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. GENESIS i. 1.

HY we should begin to read the first chapter of Genesis on Septuagesima Sunday, when the Christian year has already run some nine or ten weeks, is a question which has probably occurred to more than one of us; and the answer to the question is not to be found in any personal tastes or predilections of the compilers of the English Prayer-Book. The first chapter of Genesis has been for centuries the lesson for Matins, in the services of the Western Church, long before it occupied that place in the English Prayer-Book. When we proceed to inquire why, in the earlier stages of the Church, the truths of the Christian Creed were laid out, as they have come down to us for consecutive contemplation, for rather more than one half of the solar year, we find it impossible to give a simple answer to that question. That which in later ages has been accomplished by a congregation of writers, or a mission of divines, was in the earlier periods the word of some prominent bishop, whose reputation for wisdom or sanctity governed the convictions of his contemporaries; while in the yet more primitive ages it would seem to have been arrived at instinctively by the Church's spiritual cognisance of what was due to the Church. It is indeed this which imparts so high an interest to the study of certain dogmas; it is in fact the study of the fresh soul of early Christendom, of the currents and impulses which swayed its deepest collective life, of not merely the truths which we hold of the Christian Church, but the successive moods and characteristics of the passion with which she pressed them to her heart.

The sudden change from Isaiah to Genesis is probably to be explained by the consideration that on Septuagesima Sunday we pass a great dividing line of the Christian year, and, as the name of the

day implies, everything is relative to, preparatory for, the Easter Festival. Before looking once more in our lives fully in the face those stupendous acts which constitute the very chord and centre of the Christian Creed, the Passion and the Resurrection from the dead of the Incarnate Son of God, we are led to take our measure, the measure of our true place in the universe, and our relation to the Being who created it. We fall back upon these elementary truths for a moment, that we may the better do justice to the real significance of those central doctrines of the Christian Creed, since they fill up the outline, and afford a relief from difficulties which natural religion or elementary primitive traditions cannot fail to suggest. A serious theism, a reverent study of God or nature is the true instructor. To know what God is, and what we are, is to have found the schoolmaster, who, unless we are become inattentive in reading his directions, will sooner or later, like the Jewish law of old, lead us down to Christ.

I. Belief in the creation of the universe by God out of nothing naturally leads us on to a belief in God's providence, and to a belief in the consummate manifestation of providence in human history—to the belief in redemption. No such anticipations would have been reasonable if we could suppose that the world had emanated from a passive God, or had existed alongside of Him. But if He created, the question will, at any rate, be asked, Why did He create? Could it add anything to His blessedness and His glory? Could it make Him more powerful, more wise? Revelation answers this question by ascribing the creation to that quality in God which leads Him to communicate His love, that quality in Him which is goodness, if considered in its relation to personal beings. 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.' But if love or goodness was the true motive of the Creation it at least implies a continuous and deep interest in created life. If it urged Him at first to reveal Himself in His work under finite conditions (aud both David and S. Paul insist upon the supreme significance of creation as unfolding the hidden love of God), it might urge Him to reveal Himself personally also, under finite conditions.

If it is not beneath God's dignity to create a finite world, it is not beneath His dignity to accept the consequences of His own work; to take part by His presence in the development of His creatures, to subject Himself in some sense to the conditions of His own creation. If, in His knowledge, He necessarily anticipates such development of His work, so that to Him a thousand years are as one day, yet, by His love on the other hand which led Him to move out of Himself in creation at first, He travels with the slow onward movement of nature and humanity, and His Incarnation in time, when demanded by the

supreme needs of the creatures of His hand, is in a line with the first and most mysterious act of all, His deigning to create. 'God having created the world, so (it is natural it should be so) loved it, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Of this profound love of God there is, indeed, on earth one of the most beautiful and instructive shadows, the love of a parent for his child. Such love is the most disinterested, the purest, the strongest of human passions. The parent hopes for nothing from his child, yet he will work for it, he will suffer for it, he will die for it. If you ask him why, it is, if he gives his deepest reason, because he has been the means of bringing it into existence. If it lives it may indeed, in years to come, support and comfort him in his old age, but that is not the motive of his anxious care. He feels at once the glory and the responsibility of his fatherhood, and this leads him to do what he can for the helpless infant that depends upon him. Our Lord appeals to this profound instinct when He teaches us the efficacy of prayer. If men, steeped in evil as they are, yet know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more shall a spiritual God, your heavenly Father, give the best of gifts—His Holy Spirit—to them that ask Him? And in truth this principle is obviously of wider application; it informs us how it was, as the Apostle puts it, 'that after the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.'

II. The Creation is indeed a consideration which governs the religious thought of a sincere believer; it precludes numberless *a priori* difficulties as to the existence of miracles; the one supreme miracle of all, which governs all, is already admitted by Deism. It precludes difficulties on the score of the condescension of God, in the Incarnation, in the Crucifixion, in the sacraments; the great condescension of all was the act which summoned creatures into being at first. As the prophetic references to creation so constantly imply, creation prepares us to see a purpose, whether fully or partially discernible or not, running through human history. And it removes any difficulty, even from the belief that any single human soul, as it glides in the awful course of its history, and the complexity of its movement, and will, and passion, before the all-seeing eye, is to Him a matter of the deepest, most individualising concern, so deep, so tender, it might well be that no other being existed to share His love. Each who knows anything really about Him may exclaim with the Apostle, 'He loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*.'

III. And lastly, belief in creation is practically of the highest possible value. The disinclination to be under a felt obligation is always

more or less natural to us men, and it is particularly natural to those who are in rude health and high spirits, and who have never yet known what real sorrow is, or what acute disease. It goes with the sentiment of personal independence, it goes along with advanced forms of civilisation, and if it is distinctly allied to one or two of the better elements of human character, it is more closely allied with the base and unworthy ones. The Eastern emperor who executed his courtier, who, by saving his life, had done a service which could never be forgotten, is an extreme illustration of what exists in every-day life, in this state of feeling.

After all, it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves. Not we ourselves; of course we never should say that we were our own creators in so many words, but we may morally assume this position, we may forget the One Being who made us and all besides, and who will judge us; we may forget Him so entirely as to live as if He did not exist at all. Thousands—it is a simple matter of experience—do so forget Him. You see in their very faces that they have no notion that they have a Creator to think about and to live for; and yet, apart from all question of consequences, it is true, true to the real law of this universe in which we live, true to a truth which alone can keep us in our proper place of humble, submissive, resigned, obedient, yet withal a hopeful, a thankful, a diligent service. Yes, hopeful and thankful, for, as I said at first, creation leads us up to redemption.

A traveller in Cornwall, when gazing on the masses of granite rock which at the Land's End defy, and look as if they could defy for ever, the continuous assault of the Atlantic, has described what all of us, I suppose, have felt at some time in our lives, when face to face with the magnificence of nature, his oppressive sense of the relative insignificance of man. A few years hence and we should be beneath the sod; but these rocks would still stand where they were, still lashed by the waves, still immovable, while other eyes would gaze on them for their brief day of life, and then they, too, would close.

Yes, man is at first sight insignificant when face to face with nature; but we know that he is not really so. In reality the rocks are less enduring than man. Man's real personal self will survive for weal or woe when another catastrophe shall have changed the surface of this planet, when the elements shall have melted with fervent heat, when the earth and all things therein shall have been burnt up.

Let us think of that day, warranted by His word who made all things we see; it may be deferred for ages, it will surely come at last, it will not tarry when the predestined time has come. Practically speaking, there are two supreme realities, and only two for

each one of us—God, and man's inmost self, his soul. The heavens and the earth are transitional, they will pass away, but the word of the Creator, His word of mercy as well as His word of justice, belongs to the imperishable, the moral essence of His being, and therefore it will not pass away. Nothing can with impunity defy His justice, so most assuredly His mercy, manifested as it is in His blessed Son, endureth for ever; and none will plead with the Creator in vain that He would not despise the work which His hand hath made.

H. P. LIDDON.

The Two Creations.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. GENESIS i. 1.
And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the Holy City, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. REVELATION xxi. 1, 2.

THIS Sunday, Septuagesima Sunday, draws a dividing line in each fresh year, we know, between the past that has been thrown behind us and the future which yet lies far ahead. It arrests us for a moment in serious pause between the old and the new. We stand and turn at its bidding, and hear from out of the far past the Voice which first broke the eternal silence and spake and it was done: 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,' and we look back and see all that wonderful world that was summoned into being by that cry, far back in the immeasurable past. It reaches from us to the first moment of creation, spreading back and back to the very feet of God in the very beginning of days; and so it all still abides, touching on its last fringes our feet who stand in its midst, part and parcel with it. It links our little day with that earliest dawn, it bridges the long interval with its unbroken story; right down the long era still it has been sustained and reproduced. It is to-day the same thing that it was then, still the same faithful return of day and night, and the sequence of seed-time and of harvest, and the suspense of winter, and the recovery of the spring, and the falling of the autumn woods; and still, scattered far and wide in loose manner amid all this changing landscape, move the people of the earth, passing to and fro, settling, building, planting, reaping, gathering into barns.

I. 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.' In the beginning—but what in the end? He cannot have closed the long activity with this at which we have been looking. Whatever may have been the cause of the misery, however much it may be

man's fault, through no design of God, yet, now that it is there, God's goodness can never rest satisfied with such a close. And the heart of man told him so, told him to expect some better fulfilment. That was the unswerving faith of the Jew, the faith that smote down all his own failure, sure and confident that God had better things than this in store, a faith that knew that something was wanted which God required, and that sought it hither aud thither, and still, as it found it not, asserted with unwavering trust that that day would yet be shown when all should be justified—a faith that 'died in hope, not receiving the promise,' but always, through a thousand desperate mischances, always assured that it yet saw the days afar off, and in that sight was refreshed and died happy in the glory which should come.

So they believed, so they passed away, and Septuagesima turns us round to look at that vision of which they dreamed. There, far ahead at the end of days, a new sight greets us, a new word comes forth as at the beginning. In the beginning God created the old heavens now so weary, the old earth now so stained and sad; but in the end 'I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea: and I John saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away; and He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.' That is the goal towards which we move.

II. We wonder at that old story of creation. How are we to imagine it opening? What hold can reason give us over the strange scene? How are we ever even to shape a conception of that introduction into earth of the first man and the first woman? Was it sudden? Was it slow? Was it gradual? And each attempt to conceive it before the imagination leaves us baffled with difficulties. And yet, let us think of it, rather a new effort of wonderful creation is going on all day long on every side of us, every hour, every minute, as we move to and fro among men whom we know, among women whom we love, in hearts that are not far from any one of us, that labour proceeds. The Word, the same Word, by whom all things were made at the beginning, puts out His living energy, and lifts it into spiritual emotions and fashions the new man. Everywhere, all about us, it is going on, in toil, distress, in honour and dishonour, without pause or let. The Father worketh, and the Son also. Slowly,

with pain and with effort, the former things are passing away, and a new race of men being born out of the old, a new society with new desires and new powers, and a new heart, and new impulses, and new faculties, and a new spirit. And there are in this society new characters to be seen, new bonds of union, new relationships; and there are new knowledge, and new duties, and new obligations, and there are new aspirations felt and new secrets told; and there are new morals, and new customs, and new laws, new courtesies, and a new language. Slowly it is being built up, secured, established. The Church of God, this new Jerusalem—known by many now—its streets are trod, its paths are crowded, the kingdom of God and the new race is in our midst. It has happened, it has come among us; we can have it even now within ourselves.

III. And we stand to-day between the old and the new, and the question for us is, To which do we belong? We are imbedded within the old—that we must be. But then this deference to the old is only the starting-point of our revelation. It represents its genuineness, its sincerity, its courage. Christ was determined to go to the root, to begin at the beginning, to go to the very heart and the core and win it, that same humanity which had wandered so far astray in the wilderness of sin. And then His revelation is not merely to show pity to the fallen, but to transform the fallen man into newness of life. He enters into the midst of the old that He may change it into the new. He makes Himself the brother of the poor and the destitute just that He may lift them out of the mire and set them with the princes of His people.

H. SCOTT HOLLAND

The Earth is the Lord's.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. GENESIS i. 1.
The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein: for He hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. PSALM XXIV. 1, 2.

THE best of God's gifts are often those which are least valued. We are apt to be unthankful to Him for such things as the light of the sun, water, and air, our daily bread and nightly rest, for no other reason than that they are so common. But why are they so common? Only because they are so precious that God, in His kindness, puts, and has always been putting, all His children in possession of them. They are common because men could not live without them, or could only live in misery. If familiarity with them

has unfortunately bred in us contempt for them, it is the very extent of God's liberality to us which has been the occasion of our ingratitude to Him. It is quite the same with truths as it is with things. Whenever a truth becomes very common, whenever, that is to say, it is put by divine Providence into the minds of all, we begin to neglect it, and to forget that God should be praised for it. However many of our early beliefs we may have outgrown or cast off, there are few of us who have been so unhappy as to lose, so unwise as to reject, that precious portion of our childhood's faith—a belief in the sacred and ennobling truth that 'in the beginning God created heaven and earth,' that 'the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein.' But while we may all both know and believe this truth, nothing is more likely than that, owing to its very commonness, and our familiarity with it, we may realise most inadequately the worth of it, and feel very little of that gratitude to God for the revelation of it which we ought to feel. Therefore it is that I wish to speak to you of its worth, of its uses.

I. It is not even yet a truth known to all the peoples of the earth. It was once unknown, or almost unknown, on earth. It is not a truth which any man, if left to himself, would be sure, or even likely to find out. Millions have lived and died without finding it out; millions are still living and dying in ignorance of it. Men as able as the ablest of those who are living on the earth of the present day have sought for it, grasped and striven after it amidst the darkness, and yet not been blessed with its light. There have been great men, giants in the intellectual world—men whose names and memories scholars and thinkers still, after the lapse of many centuries, cherish and venerate as those of their profoundest and most stimulating teachers—and yet, powerful as these men were in intellect, and noble as they were in heart, they failed, with all their painful and anxious searchings, to attain to a clear knowledge of God as the alone Creator and Lord of nature. The world owes such knowledge, not exclusively, indeed, but mainly—yea, almost entirely—to God's education of the Hebrew people and His inspiration of the Hebrew prophets and psalmists, or, in other words, to that revelation of Himself of which we have the product and the expression in the Old Testament.

II. The faith in God as the Creator is the necessary basis of all higher spiritual faith. It is only in virtue of so believing in God that we can also believe in Him as a heavenly Father, as One who reveals Himself in the soul of man, in the history of the world, in the experiences of the pious. He cannot be a Christian who is not a theist. The Christian faith—faith in the love and mercy, salvation and kingdom of God, as revealed through the teaching and work of Christ—could have been built on no other foundation than on that knowledge

of God as the Creator and Lord of the universe, into which ancient Israel was divinely guided and educated to the benefit and the blessing of all the nations of the earth.

III. If it be in truth, as our text asserts, God's creation, God's universe, it must be also the manifestation of God, and address itself ever to what is highest, divinest, most spiritual in us.

1. In the first place, the world being recognised to be the work and manifestation of God, is necessarily thereby invested with a deep religious awe, a solemn religious significance. It is impossible for a rightly constituted heart to feel the close connection of all things with the invisible and Almighty God, and yet not look upon them as bound to be consecrated only to noble uses. The very thought changes at once the universe into a great temple for praise and worship of the Eternal, and all the bounties of nature into gifts to be laid upon His altar. This is surely no small matter, but the one all-important matter. It is just religion brought really into all that we do; it is just life made a long act of worship—the meanest things among which we move made sacred, so that the very stones of the street and the trees of the field witness to us about God.

2. In the second place, the fact that the earth is the Lord's is a source of pure and holy joy from which we may draw whenever we look upon anything in nature that is fair and well fitted to fulfil the end of its creation. The religious man—the man who practically and abidingly realises the truth of my texts—sees in nature more than any other man. The knowledge that God is its Creator and Lord raises him far above itself; it makes the earth one great symbol of heaven—the visible of the invisible; it brings the human mind into contact with an infinitely higher and better world. The godless man, the religiously indifferent man, sees no more than half of what the godly man sees, and that half is certainly the lowest and least valuable half.

3. Thirdly, by thus sending men to nature as well as Scripture for their religion our texts tend to give breadth and freedom to the religious character. This is what many sincerely good men sadly want. It is often impossible not to recognise their genuine earnestness and spirituality of mind when we are greatly repelled by their austerity and narrowness of view. They obviously breathe in the midst of a vitiated atmosphere. There is disease in their very goodness. Now, when we turn away from the biography of such a man, or from listening to his conversation, and read such a psalm as, say, the one hundred and fourth, we see into the whole mystery of the disease. There is a great and felt difference. You have come from the company of one who thinks religion is a denial of nature, into the company of one who thinks it elevates and perfects nature. You feel that here,

where you are now, there beats a heart, pious and spiritual indeed, but also of a large and genial humanity, and delighting in all natural beauty and natural excellence. There is nothing artificial or exclusive, nothing making the life rigid and austere, unsociable, and ungenial, in such piety, however deep or fervent it may be; whereas it is impossible to describe how much hardness and austerity and sickliness is given to the religious character by making the Bible alone, the Bible arbitrarily severed from nature and from life, the sole source of spiritual growth. I would then, most emphatically, that men would think of the gospel not less but of nature more. There can be no breadth, no geniality otherwise, no child-like simplicity, no proper readiness to receive divine impression. The influences of nature are constantly needed to keep alive those feelings of admiration, hope, and love which enter so largely into the spiritual life.

4. Again, fourthly, only through realising our relation to Nature as God's creation, God's work, can we realise our relation to God Himself. Through realising its grandeur, for example, we have the feeling of our own insignificance forced upon us in a most impressive way, not only in relation to it, but also, and still more, in relation to its Author.

5. Finally, if we really accept what the texts teach us, if we believe God to be the Creator of the heaven and the earth, rightful Lord of the earth and its fulness, and the world and they that dwell therein, then are we obviously bound to acknowledge that we owe all to Him, and can hold nothing as strictly and entirely our own. We are not our own, we are the Lord's. The law of our lives can be no other than His holy will, that will which we daily pray may be done in heaven and in earth.

R. FLINT.

All the Blessings of the Light.

And God said, Let there be light. GENESIS i. 3.

I. WE have reason every day that we live to thank God for life and health, for countless blessings. And not least among these may be reckoned the free gift of, and the many 'blessings of the light.'

For in many ways that we can tell off, at once, upon our fingers, and in very many more ways that we neither dream of nor think of, does light minister to our health, wealth, and comfort.

The very birds sing at daybreak their glad welcome to the dawn, and the rising sun. And we all know and feel how cheering is the power of light. In the sunlight rivers flash, and nature rejoices, and our hearts are light, and we take a bright view of things.

So, too, light comes to revive and restore us. Darkness is oppressive. In it we are apt to lose heart. We grow anxious, and full of fears. With the first glimmer of light in the distance, hope awakens, and we feel a load lifted off our minds.

Again, we have often felt the reassuring power of light. In the darkness, objects that are perfectly harmless take threatening shapes; the imagination distorts them, and our fancy creates dangers. Light shows us that we have been alarmed at shadows; quiets, and reassures us.

Once again, the light comes to us, often, as nothing less than a deliverer. It reveals dangers hidden and unsuspected; the deadly reptile; the yawning precipice; the lurking foe.

And when, over and above all this, we remember that light is absolutely essential, not to health only, but to life in every form, animal and vegetable alike, we shall heartily echo the words of the wise king in Ecclesiastes—'Truly the light is sweet; and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.'

II. All things are double one against another. The types in the natural world all have their antitypes in the moral and spiritual world. So we find it here. The natural light of which we have been speaking; the sun, which is the centre of our system—is a type of another light, of which we are now going to speak.

When God sends this light, of which we speak, into a soul that has long been dwelling in, and rejoicing in the darkness which the evil liver loves, a man's first impulse generally is to shrink from it—to shut it out.

As you know very well, one of the chief characteristics of light is that it shows things, not as they might be, not as they are said to be, not as they ought to be, not as they are supposed to be, not as we would like them to be, but as they are!

In some way or another God sends a flood of pure light into your home; sometimes it is through sickness; sometimes through sorrow; now by means of an accident; now it is the innocent prattle of a little child. Your life is revealed to you just as it is! There hang the thick cobwebs—long indulged, confirmed evil habits; here lies the thick dust of a dulled conscience—there the dark stains of grievous sins. And the air is full of countless motes—these are what you call 'little sins'—motes of ill-temper; motes of malice and unkindness; motes of forgetfulness of God, and many others.

It is from God, this light; stand in it; gaze at it; look through it, till you see His face who sends it—God, who in the beginning said, as He saw the earth 'without form, and void,' who says, as He looks at you, 'Let there be light.' J. B. C. MURPHY.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

The Spirit of God in Physical and Spiritual Order.

The Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters. GENESIS i. 2.
The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified. S. JOHN vii. 38.

I. HERE, at the very opening of the sacred record, we have a most suggestive statement made. I do not care to explain it, or to fill in details which at the best could only materialise, and so destroy, the effect of the imagery employed. The language must not be treated with a base literalism. Here, where the mystery of creation is set forth in a series of graphic pictures, half poetic, and essentially religious rather than scientific; here, if anywhere, must the saying hold true that 'the letter killeth.' And so when it is said that 'the Spirit of the Lord moved over the face of the waters,' we must banish from our minds any physical or material conception, and rather take the passage as expressing the energising and formative working of the Divine Spirit in bringing order out of chaos and light out of darkness. The fact which is stated is sufficiently suggestive and glorious, for we are told that all natural order is of God, that the development or the evolution, whereby the watery mists were cleared away, and the quickening light penetrated to the surface of the planet, and the dry land rose from the ocean bed, and the green grass and mighty forests clothed the hills, and the living creatures filled the seas or wandered over the plains, and man came last, as lord of all; that these were not self-made, but were under the formative and guiding power of the Spirit of God. And so are we taught that even in this dull earth, and in what may appear to our eye but the mechanical movements of blind force, we are to see a higher power; for that all are manifestations of creative, formative intelligence, even the moving of the Holy Spirit of God.

II. In perfect harmony with these conceptions of the spiritual underlying the material in the external world, we have in the word of God a magnificent vindication of the divine in those gifts of human genius which modern religionism has been accustomed to relegate to the category of things belonging to the 'natural man.' With a boldness which puts to shame our grudging and feeble apprehension of the breadth and grandeur of the divine influence in common things, the Old Testament recognises that the skill of architect, musician, and artist is the gift of God's Holy Spirit. The valour of Joshua, the great captain, and the bravery and physical strength of David, are equally ascribed to divine influence, while such matters as prudence in council or generosity in making offerings, instead of being classified as merely natural, worldly or secular qualities, are traced to the working of the same Holy Ghost.

These things are mentioned in Scripture not that we should regard them as exceptions, but rather to reveal to us principles that are universal, and to teach us, with new emphasis, how 'every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights.' We shall do wrong to the Bible were we to confine the working of God's Holy Spirit only to those persons and to those matters which are peculiarly spiritual. It would surely be a misunderstanding of S. John if we supposed him to mean that the Holy Ghost had never worked among men till Christ was glorified. It would be to make him contradict the clear statements of other passages of Scripture, and to make him banish God from His own world, and to deny His dealings with the minds and consciences of the great and good through countless generations.

III. But while we thankfully acknowledge the work of the Divine Spirit as manifested in the development of creation and in the progress of humanity, yet we ought to recognise the greatness of the advance when we pass from these lower stages to the highest—even to the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon the Church, and to His work of converting and sanctifying human souls. It is not difficult to trace the progress which is thus indicated; we can see how it passes from the law and order impressed upon the physical world, and from the development of ever higher types of organised life, on to the bestowal of those gifts on man whereby the moral, intellectual, and religious life of humanity is attained. Here and there, in patriarchs and prophets, in sages and poets, we see foregleams of the coming glory. But we reach a new level when, in the Apostles and saints of the early Church, we behold men inspired with the very life of God Himself, and brought into conscious fellowship with the divine holiness and love. This was not a mere development out of the past. It was not a mere natural outgrowth of previous education. It was sudden, abrupt, and all-mastering. It was new in kind as well as in intensity and force. It was verily a new spiritual creation, a new spiritual order, fulfilling and interpreting all that had been best in the past, but lifting all on to a new range of progression.

The life bestowed on S. Peter or S. Paul was of a new kind. That life we are called to possess. That life we may and ought to possess. The Comforter abides with His Church. The Spirit reasons even with us now. It is Christ's desire that we should know the fulness of His power. Let us seek His power as power from on high. Let us pray for it, and with the blessed assurance that, if 'we being evil know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more will our heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.'

D. MACLEOD.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

The Christian Ministry.

And the evening and the morning were the first day. GENESIS i. 5.

IS not this first day the type of what all days of human life should be? Does it not, set there in the forefront of history, bear perpetual testimony to the truth that no completion is complete or can be truly understood, unless it stands in close connection with a new commencement? You close your youth and pass on into middle life. You close by and by your middle active life and pass on into old age. You leave one place where you have lived and move into another. You are no longer able to hold one form of faith, but a more generous faith opens to welcome you! One sort of company in which you have been much at home dismisses you, and your life henceforth is to be lived among new faces. You finish a piece of work which has long occupied you, and take up new tools to work on new materials. At last you go from life to life, and with one 'longing, lingering look behind' resign this 'pleasing anxious being.' In every case it means a vast difference whether you join together in your thought only the old beginning and this fulfilment, or this fulfilment and the new beginning which it makes possible, upon whether the morning and the evening or the evening and the morning are your day, upon whether the forty years of journey as they close are filled more with recollection of the Egypt out of which he came or the Canaan into which they have brought the traveller.

Live deeply and you must live hopefully. That is the law of life.

I. If experiences were not capable of being enfolded and transmuted, how insignificant they would be. Mere facts without fertility, mere stones, not seeds, encumbering the soil. Whether there were few or many of them would make but little matter; whether the man died at twenty years old or at eighty would be hardly worth the asking. But if every experience makes a new element in the great complex future, never lost, contributing something which it alone can give, then this instinctive desire for a full life, for many experiences, which is in us all, is natural and right. Then to lose any of the legitimate experiences of a full human career is a loss for which one will be poorer for ever. This is the reason of the sadness which no faith in immortality can dissipate, belonging to the death of those who die in youth—the sense of untimeliness which we cannot reason down.

Live as abundantly as you can. The kind of life is most essential, but the amount of life, that, too, is vastly important. The direction of the stream is the first thing to care for; but when it is pointed

the right way, then do all you can to increase its volume. The stronger it runs, the more it will keep the right direction.

II. All noble life is ministry. All ministry is noble life. Every true man is a minister. In proportion as a minister is a true minister, he is a true man. Therefore I should expect that in the Christian ministry more than anywhere else experiences would richen the life they come to and make great futures possible.

The time must come again, as it has come in other days, when our young men shall feel the vitality of the Christian ministry, and seek it with the heroic consecration of their lives. If they could only know that it is of all lives richest in experience, that in it the passion to live finds fullest satisfaction! What is it to live? To crawl on in the dust, leaving a trail which the next shower hastens to wash away? Is it to breathe the breath of heaven as the tortoise does and to bask in the sunshine like the lizard? Or is it to leap and run and quiver with vitality to do things, to learn things, to become things every day? Is it to touch the eternal forces which are behind everything with one hand, and to lay the other on the quivering needles and the beating hammers of this common life? Is it to deal with God and to deal with man? Is it to use powers to their utmost and to find every new power coming out in them constantly with their use? If this is life, then there is no man who lives more than the minister; and the generous youth whose cry is, 'Let me live while I live,' must some day feel the vitality of great service of God and man, and press in through the sacred doors saying, 'Let me, too, be a minister.'

III. Remember what is the secret of that power of renewal. It is the persistency, the eternity of God. Not the minister's life nor any other life renews itself. The life which has nothing but itself to drink of dries up. It is only as it draws for ever of the timeless and eternal life that any life gets freshness and perpetual renewal. If I am right in what I have been saying to you, and the life of this ministry has this special power of renewal, it is solely because it dares to stand, because in some sense it is compelled to stand, in peculiarly intimate and conscious relationship with the eternal God. The ministry which is not near to God, and tries to subsist upon itself, lives feebler and dies quicker than any other work of man. But it is not only on the ministry that there rests this necessity. All life which would not grow stale and monotonous must feed itself from God. All life which would make to-day the transmutation place where yesterday shall give its power to for ever must be full of the felt presence, of the love and fear of Him in whom yesterday, to-day, and for ever are all one. PHILLIPS BROOKS.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

The Divine Image in Man.

And God said, Let us make man in our image. GEN. i. 26.

I. IT is not too much to say that redemption itself, with all its graces and all its glories, finds its explanation and its reason in creation. Mystery, indeed, besets us on every side. There is one insoluble mystery—the entrance, the existence, of evil. It might have been fatal, whencesoever derived, whithersoever traceable, to the regard of God for the work of His own hands. He might have turned away with disgust and abhorrence from the creature which had broken loose from Him, under whatsoever influence, short—and it must have been short—of absolute compulsion. No injustice and no hardship would have been involved, to our conception, in the rebel being taken at his word, and left to reap as he had sown. Nevertheless, we say this—that if we have knowledge of an opposite manner and feeling on the part of God; if we receive from Him a message of mercy and reconciliation, if we hear such a voice as this from the 'excellent glory,' 'I have laid help upon one that is mighty, I have found a ransom,' there is in the original relationship of the Creator to the creature a fact upon which the other fact can steady and ground itself. He who thought it worth while to create, foreseeing consequences, can be believed, if He says so, to have thought it worth while to rescue and renew. Nay, there is in this redemption a sort of antecedent fitness, inasmuch as it exculpates the act of creation from the charge of short-sightedness or of mistake, and turns what this book calls the repentance of God Himself that He had made man into an illustration unique and magnificent of the depths of the riches of His wisdom, revealing, S. Paul says, to higher intelligences new riches of the universe, of His attributes, and making angels desire to look into the secrets of His dealing with a race bought back with blood. In this sense and to this extent creation had redemption in it, redemption in both its parts, atonement by the work of Christ, sanctification by the work of the Spirit. 'Let us make man in our image'—created anew in Jesus Christ—'after the image of Him that created him.'

'God is a spirit,' was our Lord's saying to the Samaritan woman, and I would make it our first thought now. If it had been 'God is intelligence,' or 'God is reason,' or 'God is light,' in that sense of light in which it stands for knowledge, whether in possession or communication, we should have been carried off the track of profiting, and we should have been called, besides, to enter into many subtle distinctions between the intelligence of the animal nature and the

intelligence of the rational. But it is otherwise when we make this the first feature of the divine image in man. He too, like God, is spirit! he has other characteristics which he shares not with God; he is in one part matter; he is in one part of 'the earth, earthy'; he is in one part material and perishing; but he is spirit, too. There is that in us which is independent of space and time. We all count it a reproach to call one another carnal or to call one another animal. There is a world altogether incorporeal in which human nature, such as God has made it, finds its most real, most congenial and most characteristic being. It is in the converse of mind with mind and spirit with spirit that we are conscious of our keenest interests and our most satisfying enjoyments. Man is spirit. This it is which makes him capable of intercourse and communion with God Himself. This it is which makes prayer possible, and thanksgiving possible, and worship possible, in more than a form and a name.

II. Spirituality is the first divine likeness; we will make sympathy the second. Love is sympathy, and God is love. We have felt sometimes that there is a looseness of reasoning and a risk of irreverence in so stating the condescension of the Son of God to our condition of liability to and experience of suffering as to make it indispensable to His feeling with us under it. Sympathy is an attribute of Deity. When God made man in His own likeness, He made him thereby capable of sympathy. The heart of God is the well-spring of sympathy; the Incarnate Son needed not to learn sympathy by taking upon Him our flesh. When we look upwards in our hour of pain and anguish for comfort and help, for support and strength, we separate not between the Father and the Son in our appeal. We invoke the sympathy of the Father who has not Himself suffered, as well as a Saviour who hungered and thirsted, wept and bled below. It was not to learn sympathy as a new attainment that God in the fulness of time sent forth His Son; but that which is His very trinity is light, omnipotence, omniscience, and holiness; He came forth to manifest in the sight of the creature, in the sight of the sinful and sorrow-laden, that they might not only know in the abstract that there is compassion in heaven, but witness its exercise in human dealing, and be drawn to it by a realising sense of its accessibility and of its tenderness.

The image of God is, in the second place, sympathy—spirituality without sympathy might conceivably be a cold and spiritless grace: it might lift us above earth in the sense of the higher nature and the everlasting home: it would not brighten earth itself in its myriad clouds and shadows of suffering by bringing down into it the love of God and the tender mercies, which are the very sunshine of His smile.

III. I shall mention yet a third feature of the divine likeness, and it is needed, I think, to complete the trinity of graces which were the endowment of the unfallen, and shall be the higher heritage of the restored man. The third feature is that which we call influence; the other two are conditions of it. Without spirituality there can be no action at all of mind upon mind; without sympathy there can be no such action as we speak of, for threatening is not influence, and command is not influence. These things stand without to speak, and never enter into the being which they would deter or compel. Influence is by name and essence that gentle flowing in of one nature and one personality into another which touches the spring of will and makes the volition of one the volition of the other. As the divine attribute of sympathy wrought in the Incarnation, the Passion, and the intercession of the Eternal Son, so the divine attribute of influence works in the mission of the Eternal Spirit to be the ever-present Teacher and Comforter of all who will yield themselves to His sway. It needs, surely, but a small amount of humility to allow to the Divine Creator the same kind, or, at least, the same degree, of access to the spirits and souls of His creatures, which we see to be possessed by those His creatures, one over another. It is, indeed, a worse than heathenish negation of the power and activity of God, the source of all, if we debar Him alone from the exercise of that spiritual influence which we find to be universal, which we find to be all but resistless in the hands of those who possess it but by His leave. 'God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness.'

DEAN VAUGHAN.

Man and His Divine Prototype.

So God created man in His own image. GEN. i. 27.

I. THESE words bespeak our reverence for universal man as man. You will remember how they are made the basis for teaching the sacredness of human life in connection with the law given to Noah. To destroy human life was something very different from taking animal life, and the offence must be visited with death. Man is made in the image of God. That is the foundation of all law. And then you will remember how James in the New Testament hints the essential wickedness that inheres in words of cursing because man was made in the image of God.

Every man we touch to-day has more than princely blood in his veins. In his soul there is some faint survival of God's high image. It is this which clothes his right with such solemnity and undeniable impressiveness. No claim or privilege of a favoured class can com-

pare with the claim common to the lowliest member of the race made in the image of God.

Guard against cynical views of human nature. Man is made in the image of God. If so, we sin against God when we make man the subject of acrimonious and unpitying analysis and the butt of irreverent satire. I do not underestimate the good that may be accomplished by wise and well-regulated satire. Jesus Christ Himself used it. If the caustic is applied by a skilled and kindly hand, it may remove many an excrescence from the character and life. But we too often use it after the Parisian fashion of vitriol-throwing. Anybody who may seem open to criticism and caricature, we seek to cover from head to foot with red-hot, unmitigated scorn. There are writers of reckless, vitriolic vindictiveness. There are weekly publications that hold up every type of human nature to sheer, unqualified contempt. Some of you may possibly batten upon the precious fragments of these weeklies. The scavenger school of criticism may be necessary, but beware of feeding on the miserable carrion with which the railway bookstalls and cheap news-shops are baited. Do not bring yourself to believe, what will be the necessary induction from this style of reading, that integrity, truth, unselfishness, sincerity have no existence in the present-day world. Do not assume you are becoming wise because you are so cynical.

Away in the desert lies a buried metropolis of art. The Arab as he prances by sees nothing but sand-dunes spiked with thorns or matted over with sprawling weeds. But beneath thorn and poison-weed and sand-drift lie wonderful groups of marble and porphyry, and many a chamber filled with unfaded frescoes and glittering mosaic. One day a great explorer will come with firman and scaffolding and labourers, and find as much wealth there as in the richest square mile of the richest capital in Europe.

You laugh at the optimistic anthropology of Moses, and tell of Darwin's Patagonian Indians, or Swan and Murray River Australians who have a one-handed arithmetic only, or of Stanley's impish dwarfs hurling their poisoned darts from behind the trees of the forest, or of the savage of the city slum, who is perhaps as dark and brutal and hopeless as any specimen described by traveller. He is all weed and poison and cruelty. Tread reverently where the weed is rankest and the desert desolation most appalling, for in every man there is buried magnificence, much to command reverence and awe, if you will only look long and far enough. By-and-bye there will come missionary, slum evangelist, ragged school teacher, who yet has faith in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and he will find some capacity in the nature you have helped to trample under foot, and lift it to light and honour for your shame and reproach.

II. This subject seems to suggest to us that if the divine and human natures belong to the same great class and category, we shall attain the highest knowledge of God possible to us by taking man as our starting-point, and rising step by step through the analogies of human consciousness, faculty, affection.

The perfect image of God reappears in Jesus Christ just as a likeness that may have been obscured by disease reappears with the returning health of after-generations. 'He is the express image of God's person.' And in him the image was never blotted out or impaired. 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' His incarnation brings back the lost image, and recovers it for the race of which He is 'the firstborn.'

Our renewal implants Christ within us, and puts back within our reach the power of knowing God through ourselves. S. Paul speaks of being renewed in 'knowledge' after the image of Him that created us. The complete renewal always brings back the power of knowing God to the human heart. 'Blessed are the pure in heart,' said Jesus Christ, 'for they shall see God'—see Him reflected by inward spiritual processes, as the league-long landscape is mirrored in the eye.

The teaching of the Bible centres in the ultimate knowledge of God, not in a book, however sacred the source of its inspiration; not in a church, however apostolic its dogma and however sober its claim to authority, but in the nature of the perfectly sanctified man. Renewal in the lost image comprehends renewal in knowledge as well as in righteousness and true holiness.

In excavating the houses at Pompeii that were choked with dust and ash and lava streams two thousand years ago, the pick of the workman sometimes finds its way through the fused and solidified volcanic mass into a hollow space. He announces the fact to the director of the works, who then prepares plaster of Paris, and pours it into the mysterious void. After the plaster has set, the ash is broken away, and an image or perfect cast is found of some Roman man or woman who perished there twenty centuries ago. Every trace of the body has gone, clothes, flesh, bone are all destroyed, but the lava hardening round the place where the figure once lay has shaped itself into a faultless mould.

And in God's economy do we not know of processes very much like that? The first life has perished. There is little or nothing left of man's original righteousness. The nature is a scene of black spiritual desolation. Its noble spaces are choked with the very vomit of hell, its avenues clogged with the refuse and rubbish and sweepings of bygone passions, its capacities hidden away under heaps of ruin. But at the core of all this desolation there are mysterious voids, significant

solicitations, deep and clearly-defined wants. The conscious privations of man's nature have a specific character that preserves the subtle lines and lineaments of his original creation. Let the Spirit of God diffuse life, love, sanctity, into these buried capabilities which wait to be satisfied, and the picture of all that was divine in unfallen man comes back again. 'Filled with all the fulness of God,' the lost symmetries of five or ten thousand years ago are revived for the wonder of the world and the glory of God's power. 'The new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.'

III. These words seem to designate man in the most impressive terms for his high fellowship with God.

It is always possible to quicken and develop a lost quality. It is not possible to graft into a species a faculty not possessed in some degree by an ancestor of the species. By the gospel God quickens and evolves the germ of an aborted capacity within us, the capacity of knowing Him and living in constant touch with His mind and will. Made in His image, a member of the family of which He is the great mysterious Prototype, our cry has a significance attaching to no other cry that rises up to His ear. He feeds the ravens. He gives meat to the young lions when they roar and seek their meat from God. But no strain comes with such tremulous appeal to His heart as the plaint of those who belong to the same type with Himself.

In the apse of S. Sophia's, Constantinople, the guide points out a place where there is a hidden face of Christ portrayed by some early Christian artist. When the Mohammedan conqueror possessed himself of that noble Christian temple, he ordered all Christian symbols to be effaced. This beautiful head of Christ was covered over with canvas. By gazing steadily at the canvas the visitor can assure himself that there is a sacred painting behind it. Perhaps the colours have stained the threads of the canvas faintly, or the interstices have been dragged apart and given pin-point views of the picture, but there it is. When the Christian conqueror again enters the gates of Constantinople the canvas will doubtless be torn away, and this bit of early Christian art be brought to light and restored.

And in spite of the riot and triumph and sacrilege of sin, there is some trace of the Christ-like in every man—some faint line or decaying feature that suggests the glorious whole once stamped upon him, and that shall yet be stamped upon him anew. Let the gates of the City of Mansoul be opened to the conquering King, and His hand shall strip away the sins that hide God's glory in these fleshy temples, and the resplendent image of God shall be seen in men once more.

T. G. SELBY.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

Progress and Poverty.

Be ye fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth. GENESIS i. 28.

THOSE who have had much intercourse with the leaders of thought among the working-men of England have long felt that their almost universal repulsion to the current doctrines of political economy is to be traced, not only to their belief that such doctrines are, so to say, almost entirely on the side of capital rather than of labour, but also to their firm persuasion that the so-called inevitable laws, regulating economic relations, are laws whose inevitability is based on the supposition that moral truth may safely be left out of consideration. By habitually regarding labour from the abstract point of view, and overlooking the personality of the labourer, the economist has seemed sometimes to be entirely callous to the fact that for the labourer, as for all of us, moral and social ideas are by far the most important with which we have to deal. I confess it has never seemed to me very surprising that the untrained intellect of English workmen should not always have been able to discriminate between that self-interest, of which the political economist was accustomed to speak to him, as the master-motive of human conduct, and that selfishness, against which the Christian moralist has so often warned him, as the very root of all sin.

I. How strong an attraction the idea of a radical affinity existing between Christianity and all questions of social reform has for the minds of English workmen, no one who has lived and worked much among them can fail to have observed. And in making this assertion, I am not at all forgetful of the common burden of lament among all schools of churchmen, that the people care for none of these things. It is quite true, no doubt, that English common life does not grow chiefly out of the Book of Common Prayer. But, nevertheless, it is true, and as English Christians we may, I think, rightly be thankful for the truth, that no great social movement among the labour-classes of England would have the slightest possibility of success which was antagonistic to Christianity or relied on atheistic principles for its propaganda. The most important labour movement of late years in England—that among the agricultural labourers—was, remember, notoriously led by men who had for the most part made special public profession of their Christian faith. Scant reverence may have been shown sometimes to the dignity of the village parson, especially when he showed himself, as in too many instances unhappily he did, too palpably a partisan—never, I venture to say, knowingly to the cause of Christianity and true religion.

But if English churchmen would not lose the lesson which democratic opinion both in our own country and on the Continent would seem to teach, they must not refuse to recognise the hint which it so plainly gives, that in the power to bring social questions within the range of common religious teaching is to be found in these days the true 'note' of a standing or a falling Church. Believing, as we do, that Christianity still holds the key to all the unsolved problems, both of society and of the individual, it is for the Church of the present to grasp if she can and set forth, whether by word or deed, the bearing which Christianity has upon the larger social life of man. It is in this direction that she may best find new channels for the exercise of the divine wisdom of her inherited experience and the divine strength of her comprehensive communion.

II. Christ's denunciation of riches and exaltation of poverty must not be separated from the conditions under which He spoke, much less from the real object which He had in view. We must not forget, as I said, that His method always was to put the abstract principle into concrete shape. It is only a stupid liberalism which will mistake the outward form for the essential spirit. What we have to do, therefore, is not to go to the New Testament as to a code of maxims and dicta, but as to a well-spring of spiritual influence; not to insist on taking the doctrines of Christ *au pied de la lettre*, but to imbue ourselves 'with the same mind that was in Christ,' and let our behaviour afterwards flow freely from it.

But while recognising all this, do not let us suppose that in our changed times there is no place in thought and conscience for that heroic standard of human life, which is plainly set before us in the pages of the New Testament. Behind all work for humanity there must ever stand for the Christian, the Cross of Christ with all that that implies of self-denial and self-sacrifice, of call to great thought and hopes, to lofty aims and manly endeavour. Whatever doubt there may be sometimes about the interpretation of Christian maxims and precepts, of the meaning of the paradoxical sayings, of the 'cross-clauses'—as Bacon aptly terms them—'of the league of Christians,' there can be no doubt about the meaning of the Cross or the lesson of the Life, which there gave itself to death for man. Yet still after eighteen hundred years of labour and experience, the lesson of that Cross is not half spelt out. The personal lesson has been fairly learnt. But what of the social?

To make our individual lives more worthy of that filial relationship with the Father which our Master came to reveal, this we have partly learnt. But of the further lesson still behind, requiring that we should be strenuous in that 'fellow-work with God' by which according to His purpose the collective life of man is gradually being fashioned

after the image of the kingdom of heaven, have we not still somewhat to learn?

When we consider all the social evils amidst which, in England, our lives are passed, that black cloud of pauperism, brooding over this richest of the countries of the earth, of drunkenness, with all its foul brood of folly, and sensuality, and crime, of social revolt, of endemic misery and avoidable disease, and of all the countless ills which make up the terrible inheritance of ancestral error which it is our lot to redeem, does not indeed the Kingdom of Heaven, the *Civitas Dei*, the reign of God on earth, seem very far away? Are not we tempted sometimes to echo the impassioned cry of the French economist and statesman, 'Christ has come! but when cometh salvation?'

What then is to be the issue? Are we to rest satisfied with the message of the man of science, of the sociologist, who tells us that our only hope is in the slow process of social evolution, as age returns upon age; that before you can change materially for the better the structure of human society—with its many and complex parts, with its many and mutually dependent functions—you must first alter and improve the constituent units, and that this, all the laws of science and all the experience of history teach us, is a thing not to be done speedily and at once? Yes, it is no doubt true, as science tells us, that only by the slow operation of the same perfecting processes, which have raised man from the brute to the savage, from the savage to the civilised man, can the newer and more perfect state be attained. It is true that in the economic constitution of society, to which, perhaps justly, most of our modern social evils may be traced, no sudden regeneration is possible, because the class of facts and laws upon which it is founded—facts of human sentiment and hereditary prejudice—are not to be lightly set aside in an hour or in a day. It is true that in social and economic, as well as in civil and political organisations, evolution slow and sure, not revolution hasty and unstable, alone is safe. In a word, it is true that the obstinate facts of human nature, and the fixed conditions of human environment, stop the way to the speedy realisation of our daily prayer—'Thy kingdom come on earth.'

Yes, all this that science teaches is no doubt true. But is not something else true also? Does not history teach us that although human nature in ordinary times and under ordinary motives, is but slightly modifiable, yet that at particular epochs, in certain directions, and for a considerable time, it may be transformed by the action of great faith and the impulse of a religious enthusiasm? Such times of renewing and regeneration of human nature have occurred, and may occur again. As Christians, at least, we shall be distinctly disloyal

given to us all in the presence of the Lord, renewed by the Holy Spirit that ever works in those who cling to God and firmly hold fast the purpose of living by His holy will.

III. Think of what the Christian life is, and see how this perpetual renewal is always in it. The longer the Christian lives, the more he finds new hopes rising to his sight—new hopes and new enjoyment, and new desires filling his soul. The things that decay in his spiritual life are the temptations by which he has been surrounded, the temptations which have so often made him stumble, so often made him even fall. They wear away, and the man becomes more truly himself, more completely master of his own soul. They wear away, and the power of God's Holy Spirit fills the man's will with a more resolute determination, and he finds that the earlier conflicts have died out, and he can serve the Lord with a happier service because he knows that his Lord is with him, and the experience of the past has told him that his Lord will yet uphold him.

And, as the Christian thus grows in strength of purpose and in loftiness of hope, so, too, does he grow in light and knowledge of spiritual things. He sees the relations of truth and of all its various parts to one another. He learns, and his learning never ceases to grow within his soul, because he gets the fuller light from heaven itself.

And as there is this increasing light, a light which, growing larger and fuller, seems, as it were, to fill the whole expanse of all his sight, so, too, grows within the soul that love that comes from that heavenly glory; the love which burns up within him as he feels and knows how he is loved; the love which cannot fail to answer him who loves so tenderly; and the heart is kindled by the light which is given to the understanding; and the man seems as if he knew already what kind of welcome he should receive when he passed the threshold of death and entered into the life beyond.

Such is the Christian life. It can be experienced, and the Christian, though he may be far, far short of rising up so high, yet does find within himself sufficient traces of that upward progress to know that this is possible here on earth; and thus here, in this present life, the Christian realises that universal principle which runs through all creation, that God is making all things new.

BISHOP TEMPLE.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

The Needs of Great Cities.

He showed me that great city. REVELATIONS xxi. 10.

THE city which the angel showed to the Apostle was the city of God, not, as some seem to think, a city of a future world, a city of heaven: it was the city of God on earth. S. John saw it come down on the earth and there stay. It was, in truth, the city of man after God had long dealt with man. The nations are those which are being saved. He says, 'The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it.' The inhabitants are those who are in the way of salvation. The city—he gives the measurement of it—was as vast as a great country, and as high as a mountain range. It bore, too, living and imperishable marks of the Old and New Testament. People went in and out of it by gates which bore the names of the tribes of Israel; and its foundations were inscribed with the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. In the heart of the city the Lamb Himself was the light of all. It is a vision, but it certainly is not a vision about the occupation of heaven and eternity as they are commonly understood, but a vision of what man, and man's life, and man's cities, man's world are to become through the work of Christ. Once again, let us observe that it is not described as a city seen in heaven, through some open door, but a city which, from a mountain height, the seer saw come down on earth.

Well, then, does this great city of our own, in the heart of which we now are met, does it bear any resemblance to that city of God? Christianity has been dealing here with men for a very long time; has it advanced our city to any resemblance to the city of God? Those very Apostles, whose names are engraved on the foundations of God's city, once showed to our Lord another city on earth, and one which was called, and in many ways was, a holy city. But our Lord's heart did not, as they expected, rise in exultation at the sight of its great and sacred buildings; He only foretold their ruin. A day or two before He had burst into tears when He caught sight of its glories—the contrast of the outer and inner was too heartbreaking.

I. What would be our Lord's human emotion at the sight of our London if He beheld it in the flesh; if He drew near to it as its meek, unknown King, weary but welcome, saluted yet sorrowful? Would He, like S. John, go on rapturously marking and counting up its splendours as a city of God; or would He, when He beheld the city, weep over it? I am sure that there would be a thankless heart in any one of us who should declare that he could see in London no marks of a city of God. I remember an earnest Christian

man who had lived long in the sacred Hindu city of Benares; I remember he told me that no one could believe who had not known it what was the strange kind of spell which, in a weird, magical manner stole upon the Christian Soul which, morning and night, day after day, month after month, had nothing but idols and idolatry before his contemplation. So in Corinth the flesh, in Rome absolutism, in Jerusalem ceremonialism ruled the spirit of the place, whatever exceptions asserted themselves. In London, is it Christianity which confessedly rules? A regenerating power is substantially at work in our civilisation, whatever strongholds, luxuries, or filthy quagmires are yet possessed here by the devil, the world, or the flesh. So, though the tears would stand in our Lord's eyes, as He looked over many streets and lanes of the city, squalid quarters, teeming garrets and cellars—though selfishness and carelessness, indifference and hardness (which He could see through), would make His tears stream down, yet He would see His own regenerating influences and spirit hard at work to bring out whatever predicts and foreshadows a city of God on earth. He would say, There is a true meaning in that mighty cross over our heads which shines over city and river. He would be able to say not only as He said of Corinth to S. Paul, 'I have much people in this city,' He would say, It is mine, and God's blessing is in it. There is the leaven at work which shall work till the whole be leavened. The least devout person who observes facts as they are must see that there is a regenerating power at work within and upon our civilisation, and that power is nothing but Christianity.

II. It is our belief that when peoples and nations are truly acquainted with Christ, their progress becomes certain and steadfast in all that can harmonise and civilise and exalt. It is our belief that the civilisation of commerce and intercourse can do much. It is our belief that a certain instruction in moral duties can be given alone; but all that is rudimentary and disappointing, and stands no shock of change. With Christ the life of a citizen, the life of all duty, becomes infinitely richer, more varied, and more full of reward.

But do we say—are we the people to say—that it is only the poor, only the ignorant, only the down-trodden who need this knowledge of Christ? No; Christ Himself has taught us that the rich are far more backward, the comfortable far less likely to learn of Him. It is work like this—contact, sympathy, self-surrender—which, while it comforts the poor, gives light and understanding to the rich. Till Christianity has taught men to be unselfish, it has done next to nothing for them; certainly it has failed of its principal aim and purpose so long as the regions of the poor are uncared for. They may be miserable and in danger of the temptation to overthrow

society, but the rich who will not help them are in a far more deplorable state. They have already sinned to the utmost of their power against society for the acquiescence in, and enjoy a state of things in which that which is best in human society has no operation. An organised selfishness is not society at all. It is the rich as much as the poor who should benefit by the work of this fund. By giving and strengthening the knowledge of Christ we believe that we shall help the poor to help themselves, but the real force of Christ's lessons, and the power of His example is hidden from all those who, professing His name, live wrapt in selfishness which does none of the things that He commands. If we know Christ He is our God and we worship Him. If we know Christ He is our Lord and we obey Him. We teach the ignorant to worship Him; we teach ourselves to follow Him in sincerity. There is no other way that we know of but the way of worship for first bringing men into His Church. When they have learnt to worship Him, and to love Him personally then they begin to apply His obedience to the actions of their lives. Therefore it is that we take so much pains to gather men together to worship Him, to confess themselves to Him, to wash away their sins by His blood, to receive His spirit, to live by contact with His person for ever. And everywhere we have found this method succeed. We find that worship means permanence of the faith; we find worship means persistence in good resolves, and resistance to temptation; we find worship means unity and sympathy, and steadfast progress. In all parts of the world we have tried it; and we find it still the same. When men learn to worship they learn to live, they learn to persevere, they learn to rejoice with a joy that no man taketh from them.

Vast then and overwhelming as the work is before us we do not despair. We will not despair so long as the vision of the city of God shines before us, and tells us what the mind of God is for us, assuring us of what God means to make of the city of man before He has finished His dealing with it. We will not despair because the help that has been found here in this great city has been just enough to keep pace with the flowing current. We will not despair now of being able to overtake some of the despair of the past, some of the ignorances of times when men saw the stream rising and were afraid, and knew not how to guide it.

ARCHBISHOP BENSON.

OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

The Healing of the Nations.

The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. REVELATION xxii. 2.

THE words which occur in the lesson of this evening belong, as is well known, to the last scene of the Biblical story. They form part of the vision which consoled the heart of the seer in the Apocalypse. But it is impossible to understand the last chapters of the Bible except with immediate reference to the first. Nothing more clearly shows the unity of Holy Scripture—a unity maintained throughout the literature of fifteen hundred years despite wide differences of age, education, nationality, and social circumstances in the writer—than the reappearance in the Revelation of the imagery which finds a place in Genesis. The prologue of the Bible, with its story of man's fall, is answered by the epilogue, with its story of his redemption. It is in the midst of the garden, or paradise, that the tree of life stands in the narrative of Genesis; it is in the midst of the paradise of God that the tree of life is seen in the vision of the Apocalypse. But there is one distinctive difference. The flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life still opposes itself between man and the immortality which he longs for. It will not be so always. 'To him that overcometh,' says the seer, 'will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.' It is the same tree 'that yielded her fruit every month,' 'and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.'

If a nation has a life as a whole, then it has the characteristics which make life what it is—a beginning and end, a growth, an opportunity, a duty, a responsibility, a sanctity. The laws of national life are written by the finger of God. If the England of to-day disregards the lessons of the past, if she knows the good and yet wilfully chooses the evil, if she spurns the Lord God of her fathers, then who shall say that she is guiltless of her fault?

I. I speak first of a national faith. The state regards the virtue of its citizens; it encourages duty; it punishes crime; it seeks to foster a self-sacrificing spirit; but of all the motives which elevate human morality religion is incontestably the strongest. How is it then consistent with the true function of the state to preserve an attitude of neutrality or indifferentism towards religion? I say, again, whatever be the practical difficulties, the true ideal of the state is not to be irreligious, but to be religious, not to leave great human interests to chance, but to provide for the education of its children in the faith and fear of God.

I dare say the Duke of Wellington spoke too strongly when he said that education without religion could only end in making men clever devils; but at least it is true that secular knowledge is an instrument as apt to evil as to good; that if it furnishes virtue with the resources of beneficence, it furnishes vice with the resources of iniquity; and that in proportion as it extends, so does the need for an increased self-respect and self-control.

II. But I pass from a national faith—and it is easy to pass—to a national duty. For a nation, like an individual, has a conscience. It knows what is right, and it may follow it or it may not follow it. Nor is there any service that a statesman can render his country comparable to that of enlightening and energising its conscience. What has been the history of the great philanthropical movements? They have all had their birth in the hearts of individuals. Some one man has been roused to an appreciation of the evil which every one until then took for granted; he has been laughed at, scoffed at, called fanatical; he has stood alone; his peace of mind has been wrested from him; perhaps he too has had his Calvary, like his Master, but at last the heart of his nation is touched: then the battle is won. It was so in the great national emotion which issued in the abolition of the slave-trade. Ninety-eight years ago this very month Mr. Wesley wrote from his death-bed, with a faltering hand, to Mr. Wilberforce, 'Unless the divine power has raised you up to be as *Athanasius contra mundum*, I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise in opposing that execrable villainy which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils; but if God be for you, who can be against you?' Is it too much to hope that the England of to-day may arise soon or late to the same national consciousness of duty? There are evils to-day with which individuals and societies are manfully fighting, but it needs the force of the nation to sweep them away. It will be when the heart of the nation is touched, but not till then, that whatever may be the political sacrifice, no part of the revenues of the state will be raised by enforcing unwelcome temptation upon an alien and half-civilised people; it will be then, but not till then, that the civilising work of the Christian missionaries in the far places of the earth will not be any more hampered and ruined by the desperate immoralities of the liquor trade; it will be then, but not till then, within this realm of England that no man will dare to make himself gain by herding the masses of the people in the dens and rookeries of great cities, but every citizen will claim his birthright of air, and light, and water; ay, and it will be then that the journeyman going home, weary

with his day's work, or the apprentice going home late in the evening through the crowded streets of London, will not be met by solicitation, stronger almost and more alluring than poor, weak human nature can resist, to leave the paths of righteousness and to sell his soul to the devil.

III. National consecration. In that task of national consecration who shall take the lead if it be not the National Church? She is the witness of the national faith, she is the guardian of the national morals. She has but one legitimate function: let her be true to it. It is not by any word or act to augment, nor by any word or act to impair, the severe simplicity of the faith which has been intrusted to her keeping; but day by day, and year by year, and century by century, until her Lord returns, to point the eyes of the people and of every individual man and woman to that divine tree, the tree of life which is in the paradise of God, and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

J. E. C. WELLDON.

The End of the Curse.

And there shall be no more curse. REVELATION xxii. 3.

THUS, you see, the book closes where it begins. This text embodies all that is contained between these two covers. We have got back to Eden at last, we have got back to the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God, and to the river of the water of life, and to the land of gold. We have come to the uncursed region, we have come to the land of peace, we have come to Christ. I purpose to inquire into that curse—its origin, its nature, its penalty, the method of its repeal, and the prospects which its repeal opens to the eyes of believers.

I. The curse is visible. How often when you have seen some royal appanage, some mark of descent from illustrious lives, some hatchment, or a heraldic coat of arms, you have said, 'There is royalty that marks a royal descent, a royal relationship;' but when you looked a little longer you saw on the hatchment or coat of arms that ugly bar on the left side—the bar sinister. All heralds know what the bar sinister means. It may mark a royal descent but it shows an illegitimate relationship. Just so with all the magnificent conquests and achievements and attainments of man. Man looks royal, and he has something of the blood royal of the skies about him even in his

worst estate. He has marks of great gifts and grand attainments, which neither belong to the clay nor to the beast; but there in the heraldry of our race is the bar sinister which darkens the hatchment and scowls upon the escutcheon. There is royal relationship, royal ancestry, but there is that taint in the blood, and the motto of the heraldry of my race, in the language of the Apostle, is, 'Sin reigns unto death.' That is the word, that is the truth. So I say the curse is visible.

Remark again how it reigns. The region of the curse is the region of the law: it is the region of tribulation and anguish. If we are in the region of the law we are where the fire burns, and the storm tosses, and the steel pierces, and the poison kills, and the lightning cleaves, and time frightens by its limitations, and space by its contradictions and contractions. But you children of fortune, you children of pleasure, to whom all life is only a midsummer dream, and to whom there is nothing malignant, nor cruel, nor dark, tell me then what it is that withers: tell me what it is that strikes in the lightning: tell me what it is that cuts in the east wind; how it is that the curtain falling the night cometh. Is your God a God of contradiction? There is the curse of the fire, the red wrath of God. True, wrath never touches the deeper heart of God where He and the Holy Spirit and Christ sit together in their own sweet, eternal, inseparable relationship;—true, most true; but you cannot rise to these first principles; on the contrary you live down here in God's last principles. There He is only love, but the wrath of God is manifested here against all unrighteousness of men. There is that at which His holiness takes fire, even as the very air we breathe contains the flame which may consume, and the sinner and his world lie beneath the red coke of the wrath of God, and the principle of judgment and wrath runs through the race. The sins of the father are visited on the children. The fathers eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge. On some Mount Carmel God is always answering by fire, and the red curse of the wrath is manifested.

II. Having made out a bad case we will make out a good one. For you see manifestly it is of no use proclaiming to the world 'There shall be no more curse,' if the world does not believe there is one already. Manifestly if a man does not see the darkness and curse around him—if he does not feel that it is a region of aches, and pains, and sorrows,—he won't thank you if you clap him on the shoulder and say, 'By-and-by the curse closes, and even now the happy concatenation of circumstances beneath divine providence are gathering, so that even now practically the curse ceases.' A man must believe in his sentence of death before he will thank you for

saying, 'You are reprieved, you are set free.' We have not, therefore, as yet touched the text, 'There shall be no more curse.'

'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son' to be an atonement to the fire, to be a calm to the tempest, 'that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' And hence all the followers of Christ in every age have gloried in His Cross, and there our highest reason and our highest affections blend together and twine round that Cross. Through Christ you may see that your salvation is a power. It is not a historical faith—it is not a knowledge of something remote and absent from you—it is not a variety of rules and methods—not metaphysical casuistry—not a philosophy of the plan of salvation, as some people call it—not the *modus operandi* of a man's belief—not the logical sequence of a set of circumstances brought about in the course of argument;—it is the life at the rock—it is Christ that saves, not reasoning about Christ. That may be some little satisfaction to me, perhaps, as I look at the thing and try to put it into harmony and symmetry and so on, but it is Christ that saves through the power of God, in the fulness of His divine power being made a curse for us.

III. 'There shall be no more curse.' The sailor longing to set sail passes to and fro upon the shore, waiting the return of the tide, for when the tide returns the ship shall clear the harbour and fly before the wind and hasten home; and man can calculate the return of the tide: the astronomer, curious in speculation waits in his watch-tower, and notes in the heavenly places beyond the return of a planet or a comet, and by signs he can forecast the return of an absent luminary to its place in those skies: the feet of affection pace the stones of the station, waiting the return of the train, that the weary heart may be refreshed by the old face; and man can calculate the return of a train; but what of the return of a soul, nay, the return of a race of souls to their home and their allegiance, like weary birds returning to their rest? There the strain of a glad universe shall be, 'No more curse, no more pain, no more separation of lovers and friends, no more sickness, no more sighing, no more death. Once we knew hunger and dissatisfaction, now it shall be fulness, divine fulness, grace for grace: once we knew the agitation, the tribulations, the curse of the restless pendulum, now it is a motion without agitation, a life without a palpitation: once it was the curse of constant resistance, anxiety, fear, now there is no opposition and all is perfect peace.' And so 'the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.'

E. PAXTON HOOD.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE.

Perseverance Found in Humility.

But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.
S. MATTHEW xix. 30.

'THE Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.' What is life but a day, after which the night cometh, when no man can work? a day in which each has his work appointed of God, as even our Lord Himself spake of His own, 'I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day.' It is a day which has its morning, noon, and evening fast succeeding each other, in each of which the Householder is calling us into His vineyard.

I. First, 'early in the morning.' So was it with us all; early in the morning, before it was yet day, did He, by baptism, hire us into His vineyard with the promised reward of eternal life. There is no other call like this call. Then, once for all, we were taken into this vineyard.

But yet, in some sense, we may consider that there is a call of God repeated to us through our whole life, by natural reason and conscience, His providence and grace. 'And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place, and said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.' 'At the third hour,' in the time of youth, does He come to us, and not by confirmation only, but in numberless ways, call us aloud to labour in His vineyard, to do the work of God in our own soul. However laborious our life may be, yet in the sight of God, it is all a mere 'idling in the market-place' of this world, unless our labour is in His service; even religious service may be as nothing, unless it be that work of repentance which He requires. It is in our own heart that this great work is to be; and how much this work is of all others the most neglected, every one's own conscience will tell him. But, above all the other constraining meanings of this parable, by which God is at

all times calling us to this one great business of repentance, the Church of all ages, by appointing this lesson for this Sunday of Septuagesima, does evidently intend us to understand it most especially as applied to this coming season of Lent. By thus introducing it, the Church says to us, Consider this approaching Lent as the call of God to work in His vineyard; in whatever age of life you may be, in childhood, or youth, or manhood, or old age, now, once for all, hear this voice, as if you had never heard it before, and as if you should never hear it again. For you that are at 'the third hour' may never live to hear the summons 'at the sixth'; and you that are at 'the sixth' hour may never reach 'the ninth.' But at all hours of the day, whatever your period of life may be, answer this His call to repentance, with that answer of the heart which is by earnest obedience and prayer. 'In the evening, and morning, and at noonday will I pray,' says the Psalmist, 'and that instantly, and He shall hear my voice.' So, in the evening, or morn, or noon of life, may we instantly hear the voice of God and obey. At all times hearing His call, 'Seek ye My face'; at all times answering, by our prayers and service, 'Thy face, Lord, will I seek.'

II. 'Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.' The third call is at 'the sixth hour,' or the time of youthful manhood, and the fourth call is at 'the ninth hour,' or coming on of old age, as S. Augustine explains it. Such will this approaching Lent be to many of us, as the sun of life is beginning to go down; the call of God into His vineyard, as if we had never laboured there before.

'And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?' This may be the case with some even in this Christian land, 'all the day idle!' their whole life lost, as to the things of eternity, all their work to begin with feeble and cold hands. Sometimes, even at such a time, some great reverse of condition, some affliction, or the prospect of death, will be the means in which God comes and thus speaks, when He seems, as it were, to uplift a veil which had been upon their souls, and His awful whisper is heard, of judgment, of heaven, and hell, and of the door for ever closed.

Nay, it has been the case with some very holy men, that, when at last disengaged from the world, and contemplating the holiness of God, and the near approach of His Presence, they have seemed to themselves as if they had been trifling all their life long, 'all the day standing idle,' so little do they seem to have done, compared with what they had always wished and intended to do, and now wish they had done. Now do they seem, as if for the first time, to hear the voice of God, even 'at the eleventh hour,' so little do they seem

to have heard and attended to it before. Such, indeed, a sense of their condition, in good men, is no other than the Holy Spirit pleading within them, and making them to know the holiness, and the love, and the majesty of God; His light breaks in upon them through the rents and failing of their earthly tabernacle, and His awful rays penetrate the veil of the flesh, when it is about to be removed, and make them to feel that all the efforts of their past life were but idleness; their best deeds as done for some one else but their one true Master. It is, indeed, for such especially that our Lord seems to make this mention of a call 'at the eleventh hour,' because to such this His expression has been an especial source of comfort. Thou callest me now, at length, they seem to say, at the eleventh hour; and now, as if for the first time, I rise and hear Thy call. This has been the case with those who laboured long, and, in so doing, have persevered unto the end.

III. 'So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.' That is the gift of eternal life, that which is even now, in some sense, the joy of their Lord, the fruition of God, the countenance of the king. 'But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more'; they thought that a difference would have been made in their favour: 'and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.' Now this does not mean at the Day of Judgment or in heaven hereafter, for there can be no murmuring there; but this part of the parable had an especial reference to the Jews, who were so full of envy at the Gentiles being called into all the privileges of the gospel, as well as themselves. Such was the elder brother in the parable of the prodigal son, who was so offended at the welcome given to his returning brother; and the circumstance is often alluded to in the gospels.

If there is awful warning, there is also great consolation in what our Lord here says, that even at the last hour, by a full and effectual repentance, a very earnest penitent may obtain such love and such humility, as to be equal to the first; when feeling that he is much forgiven, he loves much; when he is as the lost sheep, whom the good Shepherd has found, and carries back on His shoulders rejoicing, when the good angels and the Father who is in heaven rejoice with Him. It is the seal of our Lord's own gracious promise on the words of His prophet, 'If the wicked will turn from all his sins

that he hath committed, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.'

Thus, as the manna in the wilderness was agreeable to every taste and suited to every need, so is this most gracious doctrine of the gospel to those who will heartily and truly repent, without putting off, from day to day, at whatever hour it be. It would remove all despair and distrust of God's mercy by which many perish, and, at the same time, cut off presumptuous hope, by which still more are lost. It tends to keep us, in ourselves, full of humility and of fear, and, at the same time, more and more sensible of the undeserved mercies of God. I. WILLIAMS.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Labour. S. Matt. xx. 1. LABOUR, undertaken for the sake of God, is one of the most favourable breezes which can carry us into the everlasting harbour (Prov. xiv. 23).

Mortification and Prayer. 1 Cor. ix. 25. AN earnest bishop held that mortification without prayer, was a body without a soul; and prayer, without mortification, was a soul without a body. He protested against their being separated, saying that they should join, like Mary and Martha, in the service of our Lord (S. Luke x.).

Idleness. S. Matt. xx. 3. A FORMER Duke of Newcastle was once described as a man who 'lost an hour in the morning, and spent the rest of the day looking for it.'

'THERE is great moral value in being well employed. The idle classes are waiting to become the vicious classes. This is vividly illustrated by the well-known story of a friendless girl who, about three generations ago, was thrown upon the world, uncared for. Her children and children's children came to number over a hundred, desperate and dangerous men and women of crime. No record of earth can tell how many a bright young man or woman thrown out of employ has become a centre of equally dark and ever-widening circles.

A LAZY man was once described as 'the man who could stand more rest than any other man in the territory.'

Cure for Idleness. S. Matt. xx. 3. THE rough Abernethy's advice to a lazy rich man, full of gout and idle humours, unhappy and without appetite, troubled with over-indulgence and pampered with soft beds and rich food, was to 'live upon sixpence a day and earn it'; a

golden sentence, a Spartan maxim which would save half the ill-tempers, quarrels, bickerings, and wranglings of the poor rich people, and would rub the rust off many a fine mind, which is now ugly and disfigured from want of use.'

Cure for Idleness. S. Matt. xx. 3.

The wife of a certain chieftain who had fallen upon idle habits one day lifted the dish-cover at dinner and revealed a pair of spurs: a sign that he must ride and hunt for his next meal!

Idleness. S. Matt. xx. 6, 7.

1. *The Question.*—Man has a *work* to do in the world; a *working day* to do it in; and the night cometh, when no man can work; and the Master of the vineyard (Christ) finds us, for the most part, idle, not doing the work set us and expected of us—wasting time, talents hid in a napkin, and opportunities missed.

To all such He asks—

(i.) 'Why stand ye *idle*, when so much has to be done, and the time is short?'

(ii.) 'Why idle *all* the day?'

2. *The Answer.*—'Because no man hath hired us' cannot possibly be true.

(i.) Surely we were hired at the *beginning* of the day.

At our Baptism we were signed with the sign of the cross, in token that we should be *good soldiers of Jesus Christ.*

(ii.) At the time of *conversion*, were we not hired at the *third* or *sixth* hour of the day?

(iii.) Perhaps again, later on, at the *ninth*, or even at the *eleventh* hour, the Master said to us, 'Go work in My vineyard,'—go make the world better—go and be salt in it. Trade with the talent I have committed to thee, till the time of payment comes.'

How, then, can any one say, 'No man hath hired us'?

3. *Our work* for Christ is around us—we have not to leave our occupations to find it. Ennoble the occupation. Do it, whatever it be that our hand findeth to do, with might, and do all to the glory of God.

The Creation. Gen. i. 1.

When Mr. Simeon, of Cambridge, was on his dying bed, his biographer relates that, 'after a short pause, he looked round with one of his bright smiles, and asked, "What do you think especially gives me comfort at this time? The Creation! Did Jehovah create the world or did I? I think He did; now if He made the world, He can sufficiently take care of ME."'

Light. Gen. i. 3.

It is with man's soul as it was with nature; the beginning of Creation is—light. Till the eye have vision, the whole members are in bonds. Divine moment, when over the

tempest-tossed soul, at once over the wild, weltering chaos, it is spoken: 'Let there be light.'

Creation. Gen. i. 1. The Bible speaks of three creations—the first marks the beginning; the second, the central and turning point; the third, the end of the history of the world. The Old Testament opens with the natural creation; the New Testament, with the moral creation, or incarnation: and the Revelation closes with a description of the new heavens and the new earth, where Nature and Grace, the first and the second Creation, shall be completely harmonised.

Evolution. Gen. i. 20. 'Feathers are smoothed down, as a field of corn by wind with rain; only the swathes laid in beautiful order. They are fur, so structurally placed as to imply, and submit to, the perpetually swift forward motion. In fact, I have no doubt that the Darwinian theory on the subject is, that the feathers of birds once stuck up all erect, like the bristles of a brush, and have only been blown flat by continual flying. Nay, we might even sufficiently represent the general manner of conclusion in the Darwinian system by the statement that if you fasten a hair-brush to a mill-wheel with the handle forward, so as to develop itself into a neck by moving always in the same direction and within continual hearing of a steam-whistle, after a certain number of revolutions the hair-brush will fall in love with the whistle, lay an egg, and the produce will be the nightingale!'

The Image of God. Gen. i. 26. '*Ad Imaginem et Similitudinem Suam*' ('In his own image, after His likeness'). I do not know what people in general understand by those words. I suppose they ought to be understood. The truth they contain seems to be at the foundation of our knowledge both of God and man; yet do we not usually pass the sentence by in dull reverence, attaching no definite sense to it at all?

The sea is not as the standing pool by the wayside, yet when the breeze crisps the pool you may see the image of the breakers, and a likeness of the foam—nay, in some sort, the same foam. If the sea is for ever invisible to you, something you may learn of it from the pool—nothing, assuredly, any otherwise. But this, poor miserable me! is this, then, all the book I have got to read about God in? Yes, truly so. No other book, nor fragment of book, than that will you ever find; no velvet-bound missal, nor frankincensed manuscript—nothing hieroglyphic nor cuneiform; papyrus and pyramid are alike silent on this matter; nothing in the clouds above or in the earth beneath. That flesh-bound volume is the only revelation that is, that was, or that can be. In that is the image of God painted; in that is

the law of God written; in that is the promise of God revealed—know thyself; for through thyself only canst thou know God. Through the glass, darkly,—but except through the glass, in nowise—a tremulous crystal, waved as water, poured out upon the ground; —you may defile it, despise it, pollute it, at your pleasure, and at your peril; for on the peace of those weak waves must all the heaven you shall ever gain be first seen; and through such purity as you can win for those dark waves, must all the light of the risen Sun of Righteousness be bent down by faint refraction. Cleanse them, and calm them, as you love your life. Therefore it is that all the power of nature depends on subjection to the human soul. Man is the sun of the world, more than the real sun. The fire of his wonderful heart is the only light and heat worth gauge or measure. Where he is, are the tropics; where he is not, the ice world.

The Divine Image.
1 S. Pet. ii. 19.

When a piece of metal is coined with the king's stamp, and made current by his edict, no man may henceforth presume either to refuse it in payment, or to abate the value of it; so God, having stamped His own image upon every man, signified His blessed pleasure, how precious He would have him to be in our eyes and esteem.

The Heavenly Home.
Rev. xxi. 4.

On one occasion, when a little Irish boy was sitting on the doorstep, and singing,—

'There will be no sorrow there,
There will be no sorrow there,'

a doubting and downcast stranger who was passing said, 'What place, my boy, can that be in which there is no sorrow?' He at once replied,

'In Heaven above.
Where all is love.'

The words were simple, but they were used by the Spirit to calm his troubled heart and fill it with peace.

No Night There.
Rev. xxi. 25.

When a ragged school was first opened, a little boy with a few others had been brought up from the building used formerly, and given to understand that here he was to live now, and be cared for by those who loved him. But when he went that night to his clean couch, in that fine room, so neat and so spacious, he was very joyously excited. And the moon was at the full also, and through the windows came the broad silver beams, glinting up from the crusted snow, until the apartment was lit almost as in the day. Long after the hour of usual slumber, a lady passing found him wide awake, and asked him why he was not sleeping. 'Oh, they don't have any night here!' he answered.

ILLUSTRATIONS

The Healing Leaves. Rev. xxii. 2.

Ibn Batuta, the celebrated Mussulman traveller of the fourteenth century, speaks of a cypress-tree in Ceylon, universally held sacred by the natives, the leaves of which were said to fall only at certain intervals, and he who had the happiness to find and eat one of them was restored, at once, to youth and vigour. The traveller saw several venerable jogees or saints, sitting silent and motionless under the tree, patiently waiting the fall of a leaf.

Holy Days

S. STEPHEN

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE	ACTS VII. 55-60.
GOSPEL	S. MATT. XXIII. 34-39.
FIRST MORNING LESSON .	GENESIS IV. to V. 11.
SECOND MORNING LESSON .	ACTS VI.
FIRST EVENING LESSON .	2 CHRON. XXIV. 15-23.
SECOND EVENING LESSON .	ACTS VIII. to v. 9.

The Character of Christian Rebuke.

And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an Angel. Acts vii. 15.

HE who humbled Himself, for our sakes, to become Man, humbles Himself still to behold man, to dwell in man, to be honoured in man. And so the Church has, in honour of His coming in great humility, gathered around it three festivals of those whom He sanctified, instances of His mercy, specimens of that noble army, which, as time goes on, He is enrolling, who, with His holy angels, serve Him here, and who, with all the heavenly hosts, shall praise Him for ever.

I. The blessed Saint of this day, as a pattern of holy zeal and severity, is invested with a very awful character. He is first named to us as selected for a lowly office, 'to serve tables'; yet whereas all, chosen even for this, were to be 'full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom,' holy Scripture selects him, above all the rest, to name him as 'a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.' Yet God, who assigned him this humbler place in His service, and raised him not above it, gave him power beyond it.

Full of greatness is every word in which the Scripture speaks of this first of martyrs. And so we shall be prepared to find the words which, amid all those glories, he spake by the Holy Ghost, full of solemn majesty. To look on them in one way only, as rebuke rather than instruction, they sound very awfully. They seem like the sentence of God Himself, unveiling the human heart, developing, in signal instances of his history, man's malice and its fruitlessness; how the succeeding generation filled up the measure of its fathers, and completed towards the Son what the former had done to the servants, rejecting the Deliverer whom God chose. So whom they would not have as a Deliverer, they should have as a Judge. The speech, unlike those at other times, closes with no call to repentance. From first to last it sets forth the earnest and grounds of their condemnation. It sounds like the terrible voice of God, sealing their doom. They are cut to the heart, but repent not. It seems like the two-edged sword, to destroy and not to save; the gnashing of their teeth, an emblem of those cast into outer darkness.

II. So awful and severe do the words sound that most have probably at some time been amazed at them, and at least reverently wondered how words so sharp came out of the mouth of man. How could the ambassador of reconciliation, the messenger of peace, speak so sternly words only of overwhelming wrath! And yet, if we consider, it is but one instance of one very awful character of holy Scripture; it is but one specimen of the future office of the Apostles.

There is a very awful power of rebuke intrusted by God to His chosen servants; and well may it fill us with awe that He has invested men, to such a degree, with His own attribute. Yet this same history of S. Stephen furnishes us with limitations of its use, which are still more needful for us. For man, in his waywardness, too often reverses the method of God; he is silent when he should rebuke, in what concerns God's honour; rebukes when he should be silent, in what concerns his own. He rebukes when he should be 'as one in whose mouth are no rebukes,' but 'commit himself to Him that judgeth righteously.' He rebukes whom he ought not, or in what spirit he ought not, or being such as ought not.

1. For they who rebuke should have the commission to rebuke. To rebuke is God's office, and that of those to whom God has delegated it.

2. Then also, since rebuke is the voice of God correcting us, they who utter it should be themselves such as to hope that they speak that voice.

3. Further, since rebuke is of so awful a character, and inflicts suffering, it must be given, not without suffering to ourselves also,

who give it. We may not inflict pain without pain, suffering without suffering.

And we shall suffer in the suffering which rebuke causes, if we love. Love cannot see, much less cause, suffering, without itself also suffering. How do Jeremiah's eyes, who had so sternly to rebuke, ever 'run down with tears, for the breach of the daughter of his people.' How did our Lord weep over the city whose destruction He denounceth. How does S. Paul wish himself 'accursed from Christ' for his people, whose fall he declareth, having 'great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart'! S. Stephen, whose love is so veiled, through the sharpness of the message which he had to deliver, had scarcely closed its sharpest words, when he closed his life, united, in love as in suffering, with the pattern of Infinite Love, and breathing out his soul in his Lord's prayer of love for his murderers.

Reproof, then, as we see in the Saint of this day, requires the presence of many Christian graces. Due discipline of ourselves herein may aid to foster them in ourselves, while we edify our neighbour.

We should then reprove, as using God's words, applying them to ourselves first, that wherein we judge another, we condemn not ourselves. If we ourselves commit things like to those for which we reprove others, what do we but bear witness against ourselves? If as masters we reprove our servants of carelessness to us, and ourselves are, all the while, careless of our duty to our heavenly Master; if we demand strict attention to our own wishes, are vexed with forgetfulness of our slightest directions, and are ourselves inattentive to our own duties, and habitually forgetful of our Lord's commands, may not our Lord say to us also, 'Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant'?

Then we must reprove in holiness. Before we allow ourselves to be indignant with sin in others, we must be severe with ourselves.

Then we must reprove with humility. S. Paul says even to 'the spiritual,' 'Reprove such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.'

Lastly, we must reprove in love. We must not, as we are wont, measure the fault by the vexation it causes ourselves. To speak God's words, we must forget self; we must consider reproof as God's commission, for the benefit of others' souls, and so the more carefully separate from it anything of our own.

E. B. PUSEY

HOLY DAYS

Love Strong as Death.

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. Revelation ii. 10.

THIS festival was much celebrated by the early Church; there are many sermons extant that were preached on this day, several by S. Augustine, by S. Chrysostom, and others whose names are well known in the Church. S. Augustine dwells on the significance of this festival occurring on the day after that of our Lord's Nativity, alluding to the martyrdom of a saint being called his birthday; 'the birthday of the Lord,' he says, 'when He put on the clothing of our flesh, that of His servant, when he laid that clothing aside; that of the Lord when He was made like unto us, that of His servant when he was brought most near unto Christ. For as Christ being born was united unto Stephen, so Stephen by dying was united unto Christ.'

There is indeed much that is remarkable in the circumstances of S. Stephen's death; his angelic appearance, his vision of Christ, his bold and eloquent appeal, his prayer in death, and the signal fulfilment of that prayer; it seems as if it had been especially intended for the encouragement of the many martyrs that were to follow.

The Spirit by which good men pray knoweth the mind of God, and to pray according to the mind of God, spreads abroad in the heart the full assurance of faith; and it has always been remarked by the holy men of old, that in answer to this the dying prayer of S. Stephen, S. Paul may have been given to the Church. We cannot but observe with awe how God works in wonderful ways. Here was S. Stephen, 'full of faith and of the Holy Ghost,' full of wisdom, and persuasion, and eloquence, of zeal and courage, and especially beyond all, as it appears, of divine love; yet cut off from the Church to which it might have been supposed that his life was invaluable; taken away in the very outset of his labours and preaching. But if S. Paul was given to his death and prayer, how otherwise could S. Stephen have obtained so rich a harvest as he had in all the labours of the great Apostle? How fruitful was his blood! it fell not on the ground in vain. The first in the army of martyrs who stand around the throne, he has as his companion there the chief of those that were now concerned in his death; and with him, 'with white robes and palms in their hands,' he shall see them coming in great multitudes into heaven, and shall ask, 'Who are these? and whence are they?' and the answer shall be, 'These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'

II. As Christ is persecuted, and slain, as it were, in His martyrs,

from the righteous Abel unto the end of the world, so this people, who from being the first-born and chosen become the great enemy of God, are represented as one and the same as they of old, adding sin unto sin till they have filled up the measure of their iniquity. Thus in the Book of Revelation, which is the prophetic history of the Church unto the end of the world, the saints are said to be slain in 'the Great City, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.' 'And in her,' it is said, apparently speaking of the same, 'in her was found the blood of the prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.' And therefore that very pathetic and tender appeal with which our Lord closes this His last expostulation, wherein judgment is so marked with mercy, may be carried on in its full force to all times; and how does it express His mysterious dealings with every soul, while it describes His earnest desire for its salvation, His earnest endeavour and long waiting in a case where it is found at last to be unavailing. 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!' How does this express the presence of the Holy Spirit in every Christian soul endeavouring to bring all his wandering thoughts into His own sheltering peace, but too often in vain.

I. WILLIAMS.

S. Stephen.

Acts vii.

WHY has the Church assigned to S. Stephen the first place among the three festivals that immediately follow Christmas?

It is obvious to answer, Because S. Stephen was the first martyr; but that is not a reason why he should stand first; why he stands before S. John. The Infants of Bethlehem were, in fact, martyred before S. Stephen. Three saints' days are made to follow and wait upon Christmas Day in token that when Christ cometh He will bring His saints with Him. He comes therefore, in the calendar, surrounded by His saints. But the question still arises, Why has not the Church placed S. John, rather, the nearest to her Lord?

I. S. Stephen being a deacon only—a newly-made deacon, and therefore the very lowest in ecclesiastical degree—may have had this place of honour assigned him as an encouragement to those in the lowest station and office.

II. And next, having never known Christ in the flesh, but coming to view as it were after the days of the Son of Man upon earth were

ended, S. Stephen may be considered to represent the whole body of believers who have lived since the gospel. For our encouragement his name stands nearest to the name of Christ.

III. He was the first believer in Christ who sealed his pure faith with his blood. He reminds us that the sufferings of Christ's martyrs are very precious indeed in Christ's sight; that the crown of martyrdom brings him who wears it very near in deed to his Lord.

IV. Again, it is a familiar observation that whereas the Holy Innocents underwent martyrdom in deed but not in will, and the Evangelist S. John in will but not in deed; S. Stephen was a martyr both in will and deed. And this may perhaps be a reason why immediately after celebrating the Nativity of our Lord, the festival of His first martyr, S. Stephen, is appointed to be kept.

J. W. BURGON.

S. JOHN THE EVANGELIST.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE	1 S. JOHN I. 1 to end.
GOSPEL	S. JOHN XXI. 19 to end.
FIRST MORNING LESSON .	EXODUS XXXIII. 9 to end.
SECOND MORNING LESSON.	S. JOHN XIII. 23-26.
FIRST EVENING LESSON .	ISAIAH VI.
SECOND EVENING LESSON .	REVELATION I.

The Love which passeth Knowledge.

The disciple whom Jesus loved. S. JOHN xxi. 20.

IT is difficult to speak of S. John the beloved disciple: he is so removed from mankind, not only in his privileges and the favours of his Lord, but in his being raised above the ordinary temptations of men; for what were earthly honours, or gain, or pleasure to him who was so full of divine love, that he can speak and think of nothing else but the love of God and love of man, of the light and truth that are with God? But again, the highest with God are always the humblest among men; so in another point of view is he the most approachable of saints, even as what he has written is considered to contain the highest and deepest wisdom in Scripture, which the most learned of men cannot worthily comprehend; yet at the same time is it the most simple and easy—for a child. And all the highest wisdom which he teaches may be considered as contained in

those few simple words which it is said he was ever repeating in extreme old age: 'Little children, love one another.'

I. 'And these things,' adds S. John, 'write we unto you that your joy may be full':—joy and peace in believing, joy in fellowship and union with God, joy especially of this season, in the Word come to dwell among us, without sin among us sinners.

The words of S. John breathe of love; but this love is but as the fragrance of the flower, indicating that it is not of earth, but has its root in God, and by the dews of His Spirit is nourished, and quickened by that living Sun which is the Word. Hence of old was S. John spoken of for wisdom, even more than for love; and this his festival with its collect speaks to us not of our loving one another, but of that light which is with God, from whence alone all true love is derived.

This short passage of Scripture for the day contains a brief summary of the whole of S. John's Gospel; being itself from the commencement of his epistle, while that which follows is from the end of his gospel. 'Jesus said unto Peter, Follow Me. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on His breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth Thee? Peter, seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?' Our Lord had just foretold to S. Peter his own martyrdom, and he seems then to ask in affectionate interest for his friend, whether he should likewise meet with the same blessed end. And here we may observe, how great a change has been wrought in them, for S. Peter had once deprecated the Cross saying, 'That be far from Thee, Lord!' And S. John had with S. James asked for the highest places in His kingdom. But now the great object of their wishes is to show some pledge of their love in drinking with Him of the same cup of suffering, and dying for Him and for His sake.

II. 'Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me. Then went this saying among the brethren, That that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?' What is signified by the expression 'tarry till I come,' our Lord does not further explain, nor does S. John himself, although he corrects a misapprehension respecting it, nor does the early Church, or any of its best writers; it is not therefore for us to do so. But we may observe, that he alone of all the Apostles is supposed to have survived till the destruction of Jerusalem, which was his Lord's coming in the establishment of His spiritual kingdom. Again, in one sense, he, as an Evangelist, has, beyond S. Peter, an especial blessing of continuance in enlightening the Church till

his Lord's second coming: S. Peter, though the chief of Apostles, and a crucified martyr, has gone to his rest; but S. John is still with us, teaching us and speaking to us from the cradle to the grave, each one of us, by his writings; this is his great prerogative. And yet further, as a prophet, in writing the Apocalypse, he unites his Lord's first and second coming by an account of the events which are to take place in the interval; his eye is opened to see visions of God and his Lord's coming amid the clouds. In both these he is, as it were, tarrying with us till his Lord comes.

It is the doctrine of S. John, that is especially the testimony to his Lord's Godhead through his gospel, his epistles, and the Apocalypse to which this day's collect alludes; this is the light of the Church, and the light of every one in the Church, both now and hereafter. That light is love, and that love is life; the light, the love, and life which is in God. This it is with the deep sense of which S. John seems ever penetrated; as if with eyes looking to God, and saying, 'For with Thee is the well of life, and in Thy light shall we see light.'

I. WILLIAMS.

The Communion of Saints.

If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.
1 S. John i. 7.

'FELLOWSHIP,' or as we more commonly call it, 'communion,' is the second best gift of God. The first is Christ. Christ in us, we in Christ, that is 'communion.' Next, only next, Christ in His people. The same Christ in many hearts, giving to all a holy sympathy and a mystic intercourse. That is 'communion.'

You may not always feel the power of this doctrine. There is no truth which carries the same weight at all times. But there are seasons when it is everything.

For we go through life learning—at different stages—under God's many teachings—the value of another and another article of faith. And I marvel if, some day, you shall not need—and feel that you need,—more than perhaps you see now, in those words, which are so familiar to us all—'the Communion of Saints.'

But let us never separate them, by the shadow of a thought, from Christ. The whole of that beautiful arch—which has, as its base, the whole of that beautiful earth, and as its span, the height of the whole heaven—has but one key. It is striking how our Saviour made all spring out of Himself. 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word,'—that is, the whole Church on earth; 'that they all may be one.' And now see

the nature and cause of that unity: 'As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us.' And then, as it seems to me, passing immediately from this world to the next,—from grace to glory, and carrying on the same thought to the higher state: —'And the glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them, that they may be *one*, even as We are one.' But still, in both worlds,—all in Christ, Christ in all,—'I in them,'—even in heaven—'and Thou in Me; that they may be made perfect in one.'

Let us endeavour to arrive at as definite an idea as we may—of what 'communion' is. That we may do it the more simply, I will just take it thus.

A few kindred hearts whom God has knit in one common hope, are living together, and hold frequent converse, in prayer, and praise, and interchange of loving and pious thought. That is 'communion.'

By-and-bye, in the providence of God, one of that little company is removed to far-off scenes in distant lands. But still his heart is one with theirs. Though they can never meet, he and they share the like joys and sorrows; and the conflict and the peace in one breast, answer accurately to the conflict and the peace in the other breasts. They read the same word,—they rest on the same promises, —their prayers and praises meet at the same mercy-seat; they look for the same Advent; they are bound by many an intertwining thread of mutual intercession. What then, though they can never assemble to hold sweet intercourse? What, though seas divide them? The same Christ is in all,—the same Holy Ghost. They have the same thoughts,—they have the same future. Is the 'communion' broken?

Or, in place of passing into some foreign clime, one dies and goes to glory, and there, in glory, he loves the same Jesus,—he is ministered to by the same angels,—he is filled with the same love,—he gives back the same image,—he lives for the same high end. He is only doing perfectly what they, his former fellows, in their imperfect way are striving each to do in their measure. To all, and all in all, to all it is the same Jesus. Then say, is the 'communion' less? Is not it greater?

And presently, each in his order, they have all travelled the same road, to the same end; and, within the gates of heaven, they have renewed their common service, and there, with 'the thousands of thousands, and the ten thousand times ten thousand,' they are realising things of which once they used to talk, and which they had enjoyed together when here on earth, and felt to be the earnests of that heavenly world. So the 'communion' is perfected.

First, it was militant; then, it was triumphant. And in the state militant, it was first visible, and then invisible, that, in the state

triumphant, it might be visible again. The first state, visible, was very pleasant, but poor, and mixed with infirmity and sin, therefore God made it invisible, for a while, to this very end, that it might become more perfect. Had the faith not been exercised by the stage in which it was invisible, the soul would never have been ready for the perfect one, visible, in glory. But all along, visible and invisible—visible in its early, happy days,—invisible—in the Church divided,—invisible across that narrow boundary of the two worlds,—visible again in the re-unions of heaven,—it is all 'the Communion of Saints.'

It is not to be conceived, for a moment, that 'the spirits of the just made perfect' are not in real and living 'fellowship' with the saints on earth. The text itself draws the true line when it says, it is all those who 'walk in the light.' And they, in their higher spheres, do they not 'walk in light'? Then—there is no 'if' there, the only 'if' is here—'If we walk in the light,' the result is sure, then 'we have fellowship one with another.'

You may say, 'Is there plain and certain warrant of Scripture on this subject?' I believe there is. But were there not, it would make no difference to me. Reason, sense, instinct, good feeling, analogy, a sure presumption, the whole tone and spirit of the Bible, God's character and God's ways, all require and assume it. Therefore Scripture could afford to be silent, for it might be placed among the truths of natural religion which scarcely need a revelation.

But I do not see how we can be, and feel that we are one with the Head, and not be and feel that we are one with the members. Else, the image of 'the body' fails.

And what does that mean in the twelfth of Hebrews?—does it mock us, or is it a fact,—a fact too high for us to realise at present, but not too high to be a fact, as God sees it? 'Ye are come to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.'

But the truth of the doctrine will come out more clearly if I examine, a little more in detail, what is the character of the 'fellowship' which exists between the saints on earth and the saints in heaven.

It is beyond a doubt that they take interest in us. Could God have implanted in them all those affections and sympathies, which went on ripening and increasing in them to their very latest breath; and could He have made those affections and sympathies such positive duties here, and such a part of their inward heaven, and then could He make them cease just before they were gone out into another room of the palace?

But what does God say? Take three passages.

'There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.' Who feel that 'joy'? Angels? It is common to say so. But it does not say that there is 'joy in angels,' but '*in the presence* of angels.' That is, before angels' eyes. Who are before angels' eyes?—ever ministered to and waited on by 'angels,' who stand, for this very purpose, in the outer courts, admiring and serving? The saints. Is not the 'joy' then 'over one sinner that repenteth' the 'joy' of *the saints*,—who stand 'in the presence of the angels'?

S. Paul bids us to 'run our race' well, because we are 'compassed about with so many witnesses.' I am quite aware that the word 'witnesses' there, means 'witnesses'—as in a court of justice,—people who stand up to give evidence. But what does the whole line of the argument require? That they be spectators also. You are to 'run well' because so many eyes are upon you. Any other application of that word would carry no weight or purpose. And whose are the eyes? The long catalogue of the saints recorded in the preceding chapter. Therefore, it is the saints who look down upon us with such intense anxiety that we may win the prize.

And what is the greatest and happiest event that is to take place on this earth,—which fills every believer's heart? Is it not the Second Advent? And do not they in Paradise feel this too? 'The souls beneath the altar' look for it, and cry, 'How long? how long?' For, are they not so identified with all our interests, and do they not know it, that, 'without us they cannot be made perfect'?

There is an objection to this view which will instantly rise to the mind,—'But then there must be many things which would make them unhappy?' Is God unhappy? Is not God a happy God? and does not He see these things, and yet He is happy! Why? because He sees what we cannot see, nor conceive yet,—a process by which all that sin and misery is, in some way to turn out for good. Therefore He is happy. And it is just the same with the saints. They see everything. They see evil as God sees it.

But do they help us, because they see us, and love us, and are interested in us? It is very unlikely that they do not. I do not see any certain declaration of Scripture, that the saints in Paradise minister to the saints here, except it be that we are said to be 'as the angels.' It is quite as plain as any revealed fact, that angels minister. And Abraham does not say that Lazarus could not come to this earth: there is no gulf there, only, that in that case, it would be useless.

But, whether they actually minister to us or not, do they pray for us? I should be exceedingly slow to believe that they do not. That

would indeed make the death of any one—who had been accustomed to pray for us,—a dreadful and tremendous loss.

But, think you, that because they are 'with Christ,' they grow so un-Christlike as not to do what they used to do here, and what He is always doing? And any reason which could be given for their not doing it, would it not be equally a reason why Christ should not do it?

I may not ask the departed to pray for me,—for, if I may, then a thousand others, in a thousand different places, may do the same. Then must that spirit of the saint be in all those places at the same moment, to hear them. Then is that spirit omnipresent? I may not think that. It is to give the sacred attribute of God. Therefore, I am the more glad to feel a confidence that what I may not ask, they do unasked. And think you they want any reminder?

But may the prayer be mutual? May I go on to pray for them, as I believe they pray for me? It is not ordered. We have no sure word. To pray for the conversion, or for the deliverance, or for the mitigation of the suffering of any one who is gone would be contrary to the whole view which God has given of this present state, and of the Lord Jesus Christ; and would necessarily lead, and always has led, to dangerous abuse.

But I have now to do only with *saints*.

May I pray for saints? If at all, very measuredly—with a sense, and the acknowledgment of the sense, that I am praying in the greatest ignorance.

But under such conditions, I see no reason why we may not, if we wish, pray thus far, that, if those holy and happy ones are capable yet of being holier and happier, God would make them so.

Nevertheless, as neither the Bible nor the Church has given us any authority, and as the doing it may be open to misconstruction and abuse, and may give (as it does) offence to some, it may be best to forego that sweet exercise, which rests on no sure ground or warrant of the Bible.

To *praise* with them, and for them, must be right. And perhaps the door of prayer is closed for this very reason—that the door of praise may be open.

It is a pleasant thought to think that their prayers and our prayers—that their praises and our praises—are mingling there—where 'another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.' 'Therefore,' we can truly say, with 'Angels and

Archangels, and with all the company of heaven'—those who sit at the table, the saints, while the angels stand round—'with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name.'

Further into this fellowship between us and those who are gone—I must not enter. Very pleasant it is to sit and feel its influence, where we cannot utter it. The stars, as they come out in the evening, look down upon us so calmly. But it is a repose so deep that it may well still us, even in this unquiet world, into perfect sanctity, to think that though we can never see them, yet that their eyes, more and more beautiful than the stars decking the blue sky, are looking down upon us with care and tenderness!

And they are very near us. For nearness is not space. There it nothing geographical in nearness. Nearness is similitude and unity.

But we must never forget upon what it all hinges. '*If* we walk in the light, as He is in the light, *then* have we fellowship one with another.' And not only our 'communion,' but our justification depends upon that '*if*.' We do not always hear the two clauses united as they ought to be. But God has wedded them thus: '*If* we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another:' and dependent upon the same '*if*'—'*if* we walk in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.'

If God's face be darkened, if allowed sin obscures the light of His favour—if we walk in that deep shadow of unrepented and unforgiven guilt—farewell to all 'communion!' Nothing so pure can live in that thickened atmosphere!

But, whenever another ray of real truth enters your mind, whenever you go out into a clearer justness with all your fellow-creatures, when your thoughts are, and like to be, transparent, even as that crystal sea which is before the throne, when you take but one step nearer to your dear Lord, when your daily life revolves in a closer circle round that one centre, when you feel His smile resting on a forgiven conscience, and you go in the clearness of a felt presence, *then*, 'you walk in the light as He is in the light.'

And those are the times when you will be able to feel all worlds yours. Death and separation will have lost their power; and, rising far beyond the little confines of time and space, and realising your identity with 'the whole family' of God, you will feel within you the indissolubleness of the bond of the one service, and the one love, and one Christ, and you will say—to all that is dearest to you everywhere—in all the strength of your privilege of 'light'—'We have fellowship one with another.' JAMES VAUGHAN.

HOLY DAYS

Faith Working by Love.

In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. GALATIANS v. 6.

NOWHERE in the New Testament is the close connection of faith and love so brought out as in the First General Epistle of S. John. Nowhere else does every precept and doctrine so entirely twine itself round these two centres of Christian life. In S. Paul's writings you may by a violent effort sever the two asunder. One half of his epistles more directly leads on to faith, the other half more directly to love. But in S. John they are absolutely indivisible. You cannot part them without tearing the whole epistle to shreds. Not only every chapter, but almost every verse, is equally made up of both. It is, indeed, the best example that could be found of faith working by love: working, moving, living by love, as in its only natural element.

I. What is meant by saying that 'faith avails'? What is the newness, what is the peculiarity ascribed to Christian morality by saying that it springs from faith? It is this. If we wish to engage the sympathies of man in behalf of any system of truth or of goodness, we must have something to which we can appeal, over and above the mere abstract statement of that system, be it theology, or philosophy, or morals. We read, for example, the Book of Proverbs in the Bible and in the Church services. They are most excellent for their purpose. But no one will suppose that by them the world would be roused from its slumbers and converted to a new life. We must have something more. Example, as we often say, is better than many precepts. A picture may often teach more than many books. But most of all, any voice, or word, or act that comes from a higher sphere than we see around us—any system which appeals to our inmost feelings, to our personal trust, and love, and hope, and fear—is the standing-place from whence alone the world can be moved. Call this what we will—religion, conscience, faith—it is the cause of the most vehement, almost of the only vehement convulsions by which men have been startled and moved. Many an instance might be given from history of this, as it may almost be called, volcanic power of the fire of faith which is burning within us, sometimes for good, sometimes for evil, but always most powerful, never to be despised even by those who least wish to trust to its hidden and ungovernable forces. But we need not go further for illustrations than its lawful and well-known use in the faith of Christ. Here, if anywhere, it might be thought that morality so lofty, so pure, so just as Christian morality, might maintain itself without direct appeals to

the religious principle. Yet here, if anywhere, it seems true that if the preaching and teaching of morality is to have its perfect work, it must go back to something like a personal trust and faith in the unseen world. Take one well-known instance—that recorded in the Moravian missions in Greenland. I quote the words of an Indian chief, who had been, as they tell us, a very wicked man, but was then thoroughly converted. 'Brethren, I have been a heathen, and am grown old among them. I know, therefore, very well how it is with the heathen. A preacher came once, desiring to instruct us, and began by proving to us that there was a God. On which we said to him: "Well, and dost thou think we are ignorant of that? now go again whence thou camest." Another preacher came another time, and would instruct us, saying: "Ye must not steal, ye must not lie, ye must not drink too much," etc. We answered him: "Fool that thou art! dost thou think that we do not know that? Go and learn it first thyself, and teach the people thou belongest to not to do those things. For who are greater drunkards, or thieves, or liars than thine own people?" Then we sent him away also. Some time after this Christian Henry, one of the brethren, came to me into my hut and sat down by me. The contents of his discourse to me were nearly these: "I come to thee in the name of the Lord of heaven and earth. He acquaints thee that He would gladly save thee, and rescue thee from the miserable state in which thou liest. To this end He became a Man, hath given His life for mankind, and shed His blood for them," etc. Upon this he lay down on a board in my hut, and fell asleep, being fatigued with his journey. I thought within myself, "What manner of man is this? There he lies and sleeps so sweetly. I might kill him immediately, and throw him out into the forest: who would care for it? But he is unconcerned." However, I could not get rid of his words. They continually recurred to me; and though I went to sleep, yet I dreamed of the blood which Christ had shed for us. I thought this is very strange, and went to interpret to the other Indians the words which Christian Henry spoke further to us. Thus, through the grace of God, the awakening among us took place.'

Faith, be it for good or be it for evil, cannot be dispensed with in the performance of great actions, or in the accomplishment of great works. 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'

II. This brings us to the second and equally important part of the Apostle's definition of Christianity—'Working by love.' Faith by itself is, as we have seen, a mighty power, one of the greatest that the moral world contains. It is like the central fire of the earth, it is like the fountain of the great deep. But whether it be a power

for good or evil, depends entirely on the objects to which it is directed, or in the way in which it 'works.' It may be a volcano scattering ruin and desolation around it, or it may be the genial heat and warmth which fuses together the granite foundations of the globe, and sustains the life of every human being on its surface. It may be a torrent tearing and rending everything before it; it may be diverted into a hundred insignificant streams; or it may be a calm and mighty river, fertilising and civilising the world. There is a faith which justifies, and there is a faith which condemns. 'Faith which worketh by love' justifies, sanctifies, elevates, strengthens, purifies. Faith which worketh not by love, condemns, hardens, weakens, destroys.

Take the case of the Apostle S. John himself, who as on this day closed his long and eventful life. What better evidence can we have of 'faith working by love' than in that well-known, often-repeated story of the lesson of his last days on earth? He was borne into the assembly in the arms of his friends. His whole life had, we may say, been a life of faith in the Divine Friend who sixty years before had been taken from him. In his youth he had been consumed by it, even, if we may so say, to excess—the Son of Thunder, calling down fire from heaven on those who would not receive his Master; even in later years, if we may believe an uncertain tradition respecting him, flying from the touch of one who, as he thought, had done dishonour to his Master's name. His countenance, doubtless, in those last days glowed with the assurance of that faith which sustained him even in the last infirmity and decay of all outward powers and faculties. The multitude was hushed to hear his parting words. What were they? 'Little children, love one another.' In that one gush of love the faith of a life, fed as no other faith or life had been fed before, found its full and only vent. He allowed to it no other channel; he confined it within that one word; he knew that that one word was sufficient. They entreated him, as we might do, to tell them more, or to tell them something else. His simplicity was an offence to them. They could not bear to be addressed as little children. But no; he had nothing more to say. 'If you do this one thing, I have told you all.'

This was indeed faith working, speaking, living by love, when it had nothing else by which it could work, or speak, or live. But what the ancient story tells us is also borne out fully by his undoubted writings.

Of S. John it might be said, if of any mortal man, that 'he loved God, because God had loved him,'—that he loved men, because they were his brothers in Christ. 'He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?' 'This

commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.' A. P. STANLEY.

The Word of Life.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life—for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us—that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. 1 S. JOHN i. 1-3.

S. JOHN sets forth in his writings no theory of life. He cannot, or does not formulate his conception of it into a system. Nothing is more alien from the spirit of a philosopher, whether physiologist or metaphysician, than the spirit of S. John the Divine. He simply feels a power, not of death but of life, working in his own soul. He is sure there is nothing in the world, or beyond the world, that can destroy it. Its evident tendency *to* God attested its origin from God. There might be other media to other men: to him it came through Christ.

Cicero tells us that Socrates was wont to say, that if Virtue could only descend from heaven to earth in living form, all men perforce must love her. S. John had seen this incarnation of more than earthly loveliness. He had looked upon it with his eyes. He had handled it with his hands. It had stood before him in the person of the Master whom he had loved and served. It had penetrated his heart with a force that was not yet expended.

I. We are all in search of ideals. That was his. He had no need of a system or a theory. The life was manifested; and the impress it had left on his soul could be told in half a dozen words—which still sustain whatever can be called faith in the world—'We know that we are of God, and we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and the eternal life.' It was, to use a well-known distinction of Aristotle, an energy rather than a mere state or condition. Beyond the reach of material, or even spiritual, analysis, it moved in a sphere, it put forth self-evidencing manifestations, which were exclusively its own. Its sphere is light: 'the life is the light of men:' its characteristic tokens are the spirit of love, and the spirit of righteousness—'we know that we have passed from death unto life, when we love the brethren;' 'If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him.' It

culminates in that 'enthusiasm of humanity,' in which some have thought they discerned the central principle of the gospel—'Hereby perceive we love,' he goes back to his ideal, 'because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.'

These, and such as these, were the symptoms, the phenomena, of that life which God in Christ had given to the world; which, as it became known, was placed within the reach of all: and which, as it was embraced, became a light and a strength to all. It is the same great truth which is expressed with more passion and force, but hardly with more grandeur by S. Paul—'The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death . . . for to be spiritually minded is life and peace;' 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ . . . that we may be glorified together.'

There has been a certain type of life and character formed in the world, professedly on the model of the life, and character, and teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. Making fair allowance for human imperfections and human aberrations, remembering that the treasure is in earthen vessels, can it fairly be said that the heights have been attained by those who have truly lived the Christian life—heights attainable by all, and which have been as often attained by the lowly as by the high-born, by the illiterate as by the wise, and far oftener by the poor than by the rich—are heights which have been as often attained, and can be as easily attained, by disciples in the school of Plato and Seneca, Spinoza and Voltaire, as by disciples in the school of S. Paul and S. John.

As a rule of life, bidding us be pure and unselfish, and kindly affectioned; as a high ideal, stimulating us to forget the things that are behind, and to reach forward unto things that are yet before; enlightening us where we saw but dimly; enabling and capacitating us where we were feeble and incompetent; purifying us where appetite and passion were in danger of blunting the finer perceptions of the heart, the noble purposes of the soul; laying the foundations of an ampler and higher life, first for the individual, and then for society and the race—it was thus that the 'Word of Life' presented itself to the mind of S. John.

II. Christ's most common phrase for the system which He was setting up on earth was 'the kingdom of heaven.'

We have got into a way of talking which, I think, is strangely unreal and, in many cases, fatally misleading; a way which regards the supernatural, rather than the natural, as the proper sphere of the divine energy; a way by which the *spiritual* appears to supersede and keep out of sight the *moral*. I am aware that the word 'nature'

is used in various senses more or less restricted; but the phrase 'supernatural' leads people commonly to suppose that the ways of God's Spirit are fitful and capricious rather than stated and orderly; whereas there can be no reasonable doubt that the 'reign of law,' in the truest sense of the words, is as supreme in the spiritual as in the material world. Our Lord's comparison of the effect of spiritual action to the effect of the wind blowing where it listeth, pointed merely to the invisible character of that action, and was not meant to intimate or imply capriciousness. We know exactly what to do in order to receive a gift of the Spirit; and if the conditions are fulfilled, the gift is bestowed, and that quite as certainly as in a chemical experiment. What is this but saying that the effect is the result of a *natural* law, in Bishop Butler's large sense of the word 'nature.'

It is my firm conviction that it is not so much speculative difficulties which shake the faith of men in Christ's gospel as the power of God unto salvation to the human soul as moral incongruities—as, for instance, when a man who has made a profession of godliness, who may have been even a leader of religious parties, is found out to be a swindler or a libertine, or is known by those who have any intimacy with him to be selfish, proud, covetous, malevolent, revengeful. The natural judgment to pass upon religion, when we have seen it thus associated, is to pronounce the whole thing a sham. That such shams exist here, there, everywhere, and that they justly provoke such scoffs and sneers, is only too notorious. The marvel to me is that men think it worth their while to wear such thin disguises, beneath which the true features are only too clearly seen. Can they possibly imagine that God will judge them on the principle of a set-off, as though two tradesmen were settling accounts together?

There is a danger, of which S. Paul has warned us, of the forms of godliness being scrupulously cultivated by those who are yet, in their hearts, strangers to its power. Men and women are making religion rather a matter of special observance than a principle of general self-control. The leaven, if it can be so called, affects a part of their nature only, not the whole. In their souls there are dark, foul chambers, into which the unclean spirit, once perhaps cast forth, has found his way back again: or they are haunted by the spectres of sins which they can hardly be said to have forsaken, although they are continually reiterating their confession of them; and instead of revolting the conscience, the memory of them, sometimes deliberately awakened, even gives a languid sense of pleasure to the imagination.

We have need to close our ranks in defence of virtue. Morals and religion have more to fear from those who attempt to discredit the Sermon on the Mount than from those who express (not always, it is true, in as measured language as one would desire) their dislike

of the seeming hardness of some of the statements of the Athanasian Creed. It is time that we understood the meaning of that saying, 'The Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.' It is time we appreciated the difference in value between the weightier and the less weighty matters of the law; to use our Lord's own comparison, 'between mercy and sacrifice.' And so strong is my own confidence in the essential harmony of things, that I feel sure that a clear and authoritative conscience will be found to be the surest safeguard and strongest support to a rational faith; and that he is not likely to wander far, or long, from the precincts of truth who keeps his feet firmly planted in the ways of rectitude.

J. FRASER.

Following Jesus.

Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a-fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee.
So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest I love Thee. He saith unto him, Feed My lambs.
And when He had spoken this, He saith unto him, Follow Me. S. JOHN xxi. 3, 15, 19.

THE Resurrection had come and gone. It had broken out with irresistible glory upon the blackness of that night in which those few forlorn friends of the Lord had been enshrouded; it had seized them and lifted them upon their feet, and they had possessed themselves of its splendid secret. Never through all the days, whatever the long years might bring, would they forget the sound of the ringing words that once had passed from heart to heart: 'The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared unto Simon,' or the wonder, the revelation—never could it slip out of their innermost life. In that swift moment they had passed from darkness into light, from death into life. But now, in the interval between the Resurrection and the end, what were they to do? Not to be idle wholly; not to go about the world unoccupied, unhoused, waiting only for the final change. Something must fill up the days. It would not mean that they were false to Him if they kept the natural employment of brain and muscle. So surely they all thought and felt on that evening when they sat in a group together, those companions—Simon Peter and Thomas Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana, and James and John, sons of Zebedee, and two others—a group in which the memories that knit them so fast to the Lord knit them to one another. And yet something of restlessness, of vague disappointment was upon them, the sense of something wanting, and at last the thought, the desire

of all broke as usual from the eager lips of the most active of the Twelve: 'Simon Peter said unto them, I go a-fishing; and they also said, We go with thee.'

I. 'I go a-fishing.' It was a mistake. Neither Simon Peter, nor any of them had yet detected what the Resurrection had involved. To them it was as yet only the most amazing experience of their personal lives, only an event which might lift them into changed men, and might pledge to them a new hope, but still as a mere event it must recede into the past; be left further and further behind; must become a mere memory. They might love to linger long around its blessed glories, they might wish with all their souls that the Easter sun should never set, that for ever and ever they might sit in the upper chamber and feel the breath of the Master on their brows, as He let fall upon them His peace; they might desire to cling for ever to the delightful talk which told how first one and then another learned the wonderful story, but desire it as they might it could never be. The hours, the days, the years must thrust themselves in and drive their joys far off; they were to be compelled to linger in exile with the Resurrection behind, they cannot return far in front of the interval they thought should have so little meaning. So far they had existed, yet there would be an interval to be filled up without any definite function or business; an interval to be filled up with anything that would bid the hours pass without harm. What could they better do than take up present customs, the interests that are most naturally awakened; why not go a-fishing? And yet we know that the Resurrection was the beginning, not the end. Their Master had not risen in order to depart, but in order to come again, to come again here upon this earth, to come again in fuller, richer, activities than before. The old word 'Follow Me' was now gaining its true meaning. Now the work presses, now men are wanted, let them be up and doing, let them lay aside for ever their boats and nets, let them come and follow Him. He is to be their life, to go before them day by day; His words will guide them, His eyes will be on them, His heart will instruct, and there will be so much work for them to do, so much anxious, insistent, precious work to fulfil for Him, they will have to feed His sheep and tend His lambs.

II. Our faith is bound to pass from the Resurrection in which it opens to the Ascension, in which it is fulfilled. By the Ascension our Lord rises and departs, only to take His great power and reign: He goes in order to come—to come here on this very earth, to walk up and down, to enter into it, to abide and sup, to occupy it for Himself, to establish Himself in possession, to build Himself a house, to sow His seed, to reap His harvest, to dig His wine-press, to gather His grapes; His whole life is now there, to assert His reality, to give

satisfaction to the empty soul, to fill the hungry with good things, to create new responsibility for wealth. First He roots His dominion in the Church separate and holy, that there He may secure Himself a fortress against which the gates of hell shall never prevail. That is primal and essential: He must first lay hold of the spiritual core of the man, and out from that eject the poison. Within the Church He sits like a king, a living, governing king, and out from that central home He seeks to spread His power abroad and push back hostilities and wrong. That is the loving work of Him who lives and reigns, and for this He needs us, at least He calls us, and for that call He provokes and kindles our affections towards Himself. Follow Him, for He is risen not to depart but to come; follow Him, for He is moving up and down this very earth in which we live, as when He once called them from their nets to follow Him up and down the fields of Palestine. Follow Him—not perhaps always, or from your familiar occupations, not every one is wanted, as Simon Peter was, to leave his own life and tend the flock. No, not every one is to be a shepherd; only one thing He will and must have from every heart, whether in the old conditions or in the new, and that must be personal service to Him, the living Master, which they one and all must fulfil.

H. SCOTT HOLLAND.

The Idea of God.

One cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory. ISAIAH vi. 3.

ISAIAH is by far the greatest of the writing prophets. We cannot open his book anywhere but we meet with the grasp of a great spirit. There is a rush of eloquence that carries you away; there is a splendour of diction and conception like that of a seraph; and whereas in other prophets perhaps a single idea stands out with lonely grandeur, here you have a perfect Alpine range of great truths, rising peak behind peak, up into the very heavens. Yet it is not difficult, I think, to see which is the greatest idea in the whole Book of Isaiah. It is the idea of God. It was given to him to speak about God as God never was spoken of by mortal lips, until the Son came forth to reveal the Father.

Consider—I. His Vision of God.

If any one wishes to find out Isaiah's conception of God, it will, before everything else, be important for him to consider closely an incident in Isaiah's history of which we have an immortal account from his own pen. It was, in all probability, the greatest incident in his whole life, and it left an indelible mark on his thinking, just

as the thinking of S. Paul and, in fact, his whole activity, sprang out of what happened to him on the way to Damascus; so the entire existence of Isaiah is to be explained from an incident that happened to him one day in the Temple at Jerusalem. That day he saw God. That is his own account of the matter. He says in the beginning of this chapter, as we read: 'In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord.' The exact year that King Uzziah died is not easy to determine, but it was somewhere about the middle of the eighth century before Christ. He saw the Lord. It is really just the transition from the religion of tradition to the religion of experience. Religion comes to us all first as a tradition. It is the tradition of our home, the tradition of our Church, the tradition of our country, and so on; but as long as it is merely that, it is vague, unreal, and remote. But some day this God of whom we have heard is realised by us to be here; and this Christ, of whom we have heard that He has saved others, comes seeking for entrance into our own soul; and if we let Him in, our religion passes into an entirely new stage. No longer do we believe that God exists because others say it. We know it. Christ is now in us, and goes about with us wherever we go. There are people in this city who have Christ with them as they walk along the street, as they bend over their work in our workshops. He is there with them in the midnight darkness and in the midday sun; in their solitude and in company He is with them. Now, this was what happened to Isaiah. He would not have expressed it in the same way in which we do, yet at bottom the experience in all ages is the same, and from that hour God was the most real thing in the world to this man.

II. Its Effect on his Work.

As we have seen, on this occasion he saw the Lord. But now, what kind of God was it he saw?

What he saw that day in a moment it took a whole lifetime to write out. Manifold as is the truth in the Book of Isaiah, it may all be deduced from these two things—the holiness of God and the omnipotence of God. This book can be compared to a grand and voluminous piece of music in which are combined the simple and the great, the beautiful and the terrible, but the ground tones of the whole dominating and uniting the entire piece, and sounding out ever and anon are those two ideas that were united that day in the song of the seraphim.

III. The Effect of the Vision on himself.

The first effect of the revelation made to Isaiah that day about God—namely, that God is the Holy One, had an immediate and transforming effect on himself; though afterwards it made him see in the clearest light the sin of the nation, at the instant it made him

see in an equally clear light the sinfulness of his own heart. My idea is that up to this time Isaiah was a man of the world, perhaps indulging in the vices which the young nobility of Jerusalem of that day were famous for, but now, in a moment, in the light of God, he sees the error of his ways, and the putridity of his heart, and hence there bursts from him the exclamation: 'Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.'

So much for the effect on himself of the one-half of the revelation vouchsafed him on this day, but the other half, the omnipotence of God, had its immediate practical effect also. But it was the Maker of Isaiah that was playing on his mind on this occasion for His own purpose. He was playing as an artist might play on an exquisite instrument, and in point of fact the mind of Isaiah was one of the most exquisite instruments that have ever existed in this world. There has hardly ever been a mind in this world, in its native structure, so perfect, and the Maker of it was now touching it to splendid issues. He was needing a messenger to that generation, and He had fixed on Isaiah to be His messenger, and He was making him ready. Isaiah had just realised that God was the Omnipotent, to whom all creatures and he himself belonged, and now that the relief and joy of forgiveness were thrilling through him, he realised in a still higher sense that he belonged absolutely to the God who had pardoned. It was in short a psychological moment. Then from amidst the divine glory a voice sounded out saying, 'Whom shall I send and who will go for us?' and instantly Isaiah answered, 'Here am I: send me.'

J. STALKER.

The Vision of God.

Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. ISAIAH vi. 3.

I. THE vision of God is the call of the prophet. Nowhere is the thought presented to us in the Bible with more moving force than in the record of Isaiah's mission which we heard again this morning. The very mark of time by which the history is introduced has a pathetic significance. It places together in sharp contrast the hasty presumption of man and the unchanging love of God. The prophet was called in the year that King Uzziah died. The king died an outcast and a leper because he had ventured to take to himself the function of a priest in the house of God; and in close connection with that tragic catastrophe an access to God, far closer than that which the successful monarch had prematurely claimed,

was foreshown to the prophet in a heavenly figure. Isaiah, a layman, as you remember, was, it appears, in the Temple court, and he saw in a trance the way into the holiest place laid open. The veils were removed from sanctuary and shrine, and he beheld more than met the eyes of the high priest, the one representative of the people, on the one day on which he was admitted year by year to the dark chamber which shrouded the Divine Presence. He beheld not the glory resting upon the symbolic ark, but the Lord sitting upon the throne high and lifted up; not the carved figures of angels, but the seraphim standing with outstretched wings, ready for swift service; not the vapour of earthly incense, but the cloud of smoke which witnessed to the Majesty which it hid. This opening of 'the eyes of his heart' was God's gift, God's call to him. Other worshippers about the young prophet saw, as we must suppose, nothing but 'the light of common day,' the ordinary sights of the habitual service, the great sea of brass, and the altar of burnt-offering, and the stately portal of the holy place, and priests and Levites busy with their familiar work. But for an eternal moment Isaiah's senses were unsealed. He saw that which is, and not that which appears. For him the symbol of God dwelling in light unapproachable was transformed into a personal presence; for him the chequered scene of human labour and worship was filled with the train of God; for him the symbol of God dwelling in light unapproachable was transformed into a personal presence; for him the chequered scene of human labour and worship was filled with the train of God; for him the marvels of human skill were instinct with the life of God. The spot which God had chosen was disclosed to his gaze as the centre of the divine revelation; but at the same time he was taught to acknowledge that the Divine Presence is not limited by any bounds, or excluded by any blindness, when he heard from the lips of angels that the fulness of the whole earth is His glory.

Now when we recall what Judaism was at the time, local, rigid, exclusive, we can at once understand that such a vision, such a revelation taken into the soul, was for Isaiah an illumination of the world. He could at last see all creation in its true nature through the light of God. So to have looked upon it was to have gained that which the seer, cleansed by the sacred fire, was constrained to declare. Humbled, and purified in his humiliation, he could have but one answer when the voice of the Lord required a messenger, 'Here am I: send me.'

II. And as it was then it is now. If that response of Isaiah seems to us, as it must do, to be natural or even necessary when we realise his position, let us not shrink from the confession that Isaiah's vision, Isaiah's call, are for us also, and that they await from us a like

response. When Isaiah looked upon that august sight he saw, as S. John tells us, Christ's glory (S. John xii. 41) ; he saw in figures and far off that which we have been allowed to contemplate more nearly and with the power of closer apprehension. He saw in transitory shadows that which we have received in a historic presence. By the Incarnation God has entered, and empowered us to feel that He has entered, into fellowship with humanity and men. As often as that truth rises before our eyes, all heaven is indeed rent open, and all earth is displayed as God made it. For us, then, the vision and the call of Isaiah find a fuller form, a more sovereign voice in the gospel than the Jewish prophet could know. So He calls you to be prophets.

And let us gratefully recognise the divine order in which it is presented to us. The festival of Revelation follows the festival of the Spirit. The festival of the Spirit closes the cycle of the historic festivals of the Church. And now all the facts of the historic gospel are crowned by the thought of God in Himself; and that thought, summed up in the Triune Name into which we were baptized, is offered to us afresh to-day for calm study. We are called upon to use the 'power from on high with which we have been clothed,' to regard yet once again with questioning devotion the secret of the eternal life which has been made known to us of the use of earth in the Person of Christ.

And what, therefore, we ask, does *the mystery*, the revelation *of God, even Christ* (Col. ii. 2), mean, the mystery of which we are ministers and prophets, the mystery which brings the eternal within the forms of time, the mystery which shows to us absolute love made visible in the Incarnate Word? It means—it must mean if only we think patiently and calmly—that the outward, the transitory, is a veil woven by the necessities of our weakness, which half hides and half reveals the realities with which it corresponds; it means that the changing forms in which spiritual aspirations are clothed from generation to generation, and from life to life, are illuminated, quickened, harmonised in one supreme fact; it means that beyond the temples in which it is our blessing to worship, and beyond the phrases which it is our joy to affirm, there is an infinite glory which can have no local circumscription, and an infinite truth which cannot be grasped by any human thought; it means that man, bruised and burdened by sorrows and sins, was made for God, and that through His holy love he shall not fail of his destiny; it means that all creation is an expression of God's thought of wisdom brought within the reach of human intelligence; it means that God's Spirit, sent in His Son's name, will interpret little by little, as we can read the lesson, all things as contributory to His praise; it means that we

also, compassed with infirmities and burdened with sins, may take up the song of the redeemed creation, the song of the unfallen angels, and say, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the fulness of the earth is His glory.' It means this, and more than this, more than mind can shape and tongue can utter, and as the light streams in upon us we cannot refuse to acknowledge the obligation by which we are bound to make known that which is made plain by its brightness; to interpret to others according to the teaching of our own experience the truth which has been disclosed to our souls.

III. For even as the vision of God is the call of the prophet; so it is this vision which the prophet has to proclaim and to interpret to his fellow-men, not as an intellectual theory, but as an inspiration of life. The prophet's teaching must be the translation of his experience. He bears witness of that which he has seen. His words are not an echo but a living testimony. The heart alone can speak to the heart. But he who has beheld the least fragment of the divine glory, he who has spelt out in letters of light on the face of the world one syllable of the Triune Name, will have a confidence and a power which nothing else can bring. Only let him trust what he has seen, and it will become to him as a guiding-star till he rests in the unveiled presence of Christ.

And so let us all thank God, on this festival of Revelation, that He has called us in the fulfilment of our prophet's office to unfold a growing message, and not to rehearse a stereotyped tradition. The gospel of Christ Incarnate, the gospel of the Holy Trinity in the terms of human life, which we have to announce, covers every imaginable part of life to the end of time, and is new now as it has been new in all the past, as it will be new, new in its power and new in its meaning, while the world lasts. It was new when S. John at Ephesus was enabled to express its fundamental truth in the doctrine of the Word; new when Athanasius at Nicæa affirmed through it the living unity of the Godhead without derogating from the Lord's Deity; new when Anselm at Bec sought in it, however partially and inadequately, a solution of the problem of eternal justice; new when Luther at Wittenberg found in it the ground of personal communion with God; new in our own generation, new with an untold message, when we are bidden to acknowledge it in the pledge of that ultimate fellowship of created things which the latest researches in nature and in history offer for consecration.

The vision of God is, as we have seen, the call of the prophet, and the message of the prophet. It is also the chastening of the prophet.

And in the fulfilment of our prophetic work we need, I think, more than we know the abasing and elevating influences which the vision of Isaiah and the thoughts of to-day are fitted to create or

deepen. In the stress of restless occupation we are tempted to leave too much out of sight the inevitable mysteries of life. We deal lightly with the greatest questions. We are peremptory in defining details of dogma beyond the teaching of Scripture. We are familiar beyond Apostolic precedent in our approaches to God. We fashion heavenly things after the fashion of earth. We are like Mary Magdalene, who in her mistaken love would have kept her Lord as she had first known Him, when as yet the Ascension had not revealed the nature of an eternal fellowship, and made such fellowship possible; and once more Christ, as we recognise Him at first under the conditions of earth, seems to be saying to us, 'Cling not to Me,' not with the hand but with the soul must you hold Me if you would enjoy My abiding presence.

In all these respects then, for our strengthening and for our purifying, we must seek for ourselves and strive to spread about us the sense of the awfulness of being, as those who have seen God at Bethlehem, Calvary, Olivet, and on the throne encircled by a rainbow as an emerald: the sense, vague and imperfect at the best, of the illimitable range of the courses and issues of action; the sense of the untold vastness of that life which we are bold to measure by our feeble powers; the sense of the Majesty of Him before whom the angels veil their faces. If we are cast down by the meannesses, the sorrows, the sins of the world, it is because we dwell on some little part of which we see little; but let the thought of God in Christ come in, and we can rest in that holy splendour.

It is good for us to reflect on the greatness of God, which is as immeasurable as His love. And may He in His great mercy cleanse our dull eyes, and check our hasty tongues, and calm our impetuous reasonings; and so in the solemn calm the vision of Him—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—will take shape slowly before us.

BISHOP HERBERT.

Isaiah's Vision.

And one cried unto another and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory. ISAIAH vi. 3.

I. THE revelation of awe was the first of this vision for the Old Testament, but was not the only one. While Isaiah stands trembling before the Infinite Holiness there flew one to him with a live coal from off the altar. With this he touches the unclean lips, saying, 'Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.' There was a gospel of the Old Testament as there is a gospel of the New. God taught by type till He could safely teach by antitype, by sense

and matter till He could make spirit all. Isaiah knew well what that seraphim meant. That coal spoke to him of an atonement, of a sacrifice, to be revealed in the fulness of time, which could indeed take away sin. The touching of those lips was emblematic of the cleansing of the heart, for out of the heart the mouth speaketh. The man moves altogether, and in this sense the cleansing of part implies the cleansing every whit. But no sooner is the iniquity taken away by the application of the coal from the altar, than the ear is quick to catch the words, 'Whom shall I send?' and the heart is prompt to reply, 'Here am I: send me.' There are those who would undertake God's commissions before they have personally felt God's absolution; there are those who would start at once from Jerusalem after the Ascension, instead of tarrying there during the ten days of pause to be endued with power from on high. In these days of many ordinations, who shall say in what cases the live coal has first touched the lips ere the fluent response comes from them, 'Here am I: send me!' First the altar of sacrifice, then the altar of incense. Forgiveness first, then the spirit. This coal hath touched thy lips, now open them for God. My sin is taken away, now send me.

II. But it is time that we fixed our thoughts upon the very words themselves of the text, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.' We have called it the *Te Deum* of heaven. The Church's *Te Deum* has added a word to it. 'Heaven and earth,' we say, 'Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of Thy glory.' The celestial song speaks of earth; the response of earth presumes to embrace heaven. God must be seen somewhere before He can be seen everywhere, therefore He chose Him an earthly habitation, and therefore He placed there an emblem of His glory. But the real thing is something different, the real glory of God is the manifestation of Himself: the spiritual manifestation of what He is in holiness, in power, in love; what He is in Himself, Father, Saviour, Sanctifier; what He is in creation, the sustentation, the renovation of all being; what He is in feeling, in conduct, in government, in mind, in purpose, in grace, in forbearance, in judgment, in sympathy, lovingkindness, and help. This is the luminous substance of which glory is the forth-shining, and so when we say, 'Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory,' we say this: 'Heaven and earth are full of the manifestation of that which Thou art. Thou art not hidden; the light of Thy character, of Thy will, of Thy love, is covered with no bushel; it shines full through earth and heaven; men can take knowledge of Thee in the face of Jesus Christ.'

III. Those heavenly beings see matters more clearly, more intelligently, because with a larger and longer vision. They could see even in Isaiah's time, they can see better since Christ's day, how all things

are working onward towards a consummation which shall be realised in His time. They have an understanding of the fitnesses and congruities in their idea of the due season which to us living in the maze and tangle of this present is utterly inappreciable and incomprehensible. And doubtless they see now how God is really filling earth already with His glory, apportioning already for example punishment to sin and reward to holiness—real punishment and real reward, that which is inward and spiritual; meeting out already to vice and crime its shame and its misery, not outward wholly but self-confessed, and making glad with the secret light of His smile and of His benediction hearts that to the eye of flesh are dwelling in the thickest darkness of solitude, of distress, of disappointment and discomfiture.

We labour and wrestle, not wholly and always in vain, to raise ourselves to the response of the good vision, and we do so by the addition of one word to our *Te Deum*, a word without which we should have no heart to sing it. They say 'earth,' we say 'heaven.' When we despair of things which are seen, we look upward through a sunlit or starlit sky into a world out of sight, where we believe no cloud or evil intercepts the beatific vision. If we could not say 'heaven,' neither could we say 'earth is full of glory.' It is the thought of souls washed white in blood that makes us sure that, could we see as they, we should discern glory where we are now only conscious of gloom. We must come down from the contemplations of heaven and its glory, into scenes most unlike and opposite. Only we must be assured that *there* is reality, *here* is semblance; *here* is the life which is but for a day, *there* is the life which is for immortality: and we must bring down that life with us into this. It is our duty, it is our happiness, it is our grace, for the cry rings through heaven, 'earth is full of Thy glory.' We must make it true. True it will be with our help, or without it; only let it be true for us, not against us; true for our joy and for our glory, not true for our disgrace and for our harm.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

The Peace of Forgiveness.

Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar. And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sins purged. ISAIAH vi. 6-7.

I. WHEN the sinner is awakening to a sense of sin, and when under the power of that sense of sin he condemns himself and sorrows for his sin, and turns sin-burdened to his God, he does it

with the yearning to obtain from God peace of conscience, and he knows that this peace of conscience can only be his in the power of the divine forgiving. The more clearly as we see our sin in the light of God, the more clearly do we recognise the fact that, directly or indirectly, all sin is directed against God. Every sin which we have ever committed against God's creature derives special heinousness from the fact that he whom we have injured by the sin is God's creature—is God's. The sense of guilt always, if you analyse it, means this, that by my sin I have altered my true relationship with God, and that I have given Him cause of offence, and He must have with me a reckoning. Now this consciousness of sin not only lives on, but it becomes intensified the more we advance in the way of repentance. Quickened in conviction, it is increased in contrition, and as we pray for mercy and acknowledge our transgression, more and more does the conscience within us speak out God's condemnation of our sin. And if penitence is not to issue in the paralysis of moral despairing, if it is to be a rising into newness of life, of life lived in the love and the liberty of God, one thing is certain, God must meet me where I am with the peace of His forgiveness. See how clearly this is put before us in the incident of which my text forms a portion of the narrative. What was the meaning of it to Isaiah? If I am not mistaken, it is this: Up to this time all that system of sacred rites to which he had yielded all perfunctory obedience had been to him but as dead ceremonies, but now he sees that each of them is a living thing instinct with divine life and power, each a splendid sacrament of grace to him who in conscious spiritual need will approach not it, but the God of Israel in and through it. And he realises how that, sinner as he is, he is by the providence of God in the midst of a great and glorious spiritual system in which his craving for peace is met, and where the divine absolution is brought home to him. And as it was with him, so in very reality it is with us.

II. Where are we waiting? Waiting in the Church of the Living God, waiting in the midst of that divine society whose creator is the incarnate Christ Himself. Waiting, possessing as our spiritual heritage the right of living in the midst of splendid ministries, ministries which down through the centuries of Christendom have been effectual ministries of peace unto countless troubled consciences, privileged to live where on every hand the message of forgiveness falls upon our listening ear, and where the gift of forgiveness is brought home to us in sacred ministerial rites. What is it that gives to this great system of Christendom the peace-giving power that by the confession of nineteen centuries it has? It is this. Behind all the ministries of the Church, vocal and sacramental, lies

the pleading Priest, at the golden altar in heaven, for ever present and pleading before the Father the consummated sacrifice of Calvary. That sacrifice takes the form of a great offering of propitiation. If it were not a sacrifice offered in connection with sin and for sin there would be in it no suffering, no blood-shedding, no death. But because the Christ comes there to meet, not the needs of man as a creature only, but man as a sinful creature, because He comes to be the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world, therefore He has to submit unto those painful conditions of His sacrificial life which are consummated in the passion and the shame of His sacrificial death.

In the very beginning of my life, in the unconsciousness of my infancy, before I could lay hold on Him, God laid hold on me by the hand of Jesus, in the power of the Spirit, and in the sacrament of baptism. I was baptized into the covenant of forgiveness. I was baptized into the remission of sins, not into the position in which forgiveness of sin was mine of necessity and unconditionally, but into a position in which that forgiveness is mine assuredly if I am only true to the condition of the covenant. If I repent and forsake my sin, and turn to my God and throw myself upon His mercy, that forgiveness of sin is mine because I have been baptized unto Christ Jesus. And, as if this were not sufficient, God in His own great love, that He may raise us through forgiveness into peace, has created in His Church a second ministry, to which the forgiveness of sin is tied, though that forgiveness is not limited to it—I mean of course the ministry of absolution. As of old the angel came from God to Isaiah with the message of forgiveness, so now whenever God's people acknowledge their sin in the congregation or in personal confession, God's answer to their confession is the authority of utterance of His forgiveness by commissioned lips. GEORGE BODY.

Our Appointed Place.

Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following, which also leaned on His breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth Thee? Peter, seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. S. JOHN xxi. 20-22.

I. SIMON PETER is so interesting a character because he surrenders himself, whole and undivided, to the full force of a present impression. Whatever it is that is acting upon him, to that he yields himself with the frank simplicity of a child. He has no self-conscious reserve, no suspicions, no suspensive reflections to make;

his entire being lies transparently open and receptive, and so it is that the full pressure of each situation tells upon him, and, passing straight through him without let or hindrance, its effect upon him issues at once through his lips in the first expression that comes to hand. Thus it is always, we know, the perfect mirror of the moment's meaning. He is quick to feel, and quick to utter what he feels. No self-regard for consistency troubles him; what does his own reputation matter? He has no after-thoughts; he speaks out what is in him, and that is enough. And this temper of rapid susceptibility has its weakness as it has its strength. It has weakness, for it renders him liable to surrender to momentary panic. It is he, so tenderly sensitive to the personal influence of the Master, who is also equally sensitive to the chilling atmosphere of disappointment. He succumbs when that personal presence on which he relies is withdrawn, and in its place is the contempt of the servants of the High Priest and the light scoff of the peasant maid. And yet, with all its risks, this receptive, fervent heart has a strength of its own which the Master, who knows what is in the man, values highest, it seems, above all. That unqualified, spontaneous self-surrender, which seemed to make Simon the plaything of passing impressions, a vane that veered so fast with every wind that blew, served also to lay him open, beyond all others, to the power of the Lord's personality; the guileless transparency gives himself away to the Master's handling. He has the susceptibility of a faith that sets no limits on its own loyalty. And therefore he was again and again borne up beyond the barriers which encumbered and delayed others. He took in the meaning of Christ while they were still slumbering, he spoke out the word which others felt after and could not find—headlong in wrong, he is headlong also in right. The child's heart, the child's spontaneity, the child's freedom, if these could be rescued from the risk of fluctuation, they would be stronger than iron. And they can be fixed by one motive, and one only, by the sway of a personal attachment. A child's love in its fervent ardour would make all the rest sink; once obtain that, and then you would have in such a character as this that which fires would not burn nor floods drown. Love would do it—intense personal love. Then the man whose susceptibility to change has associated his name, through his denial, with the weathercock, veering through every wind, would become as an adamantine rock fit for the foundation of the Eternal House. Love would fix it. And, therefore, Jesus asks of him but one security, 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?'

II. 'Lord, and what shall this man do?' This is a question that should come readily to our lips, and the more we care for men, and the more we believe in Christ, the more instructive and natural the

question should be, for it springs out of faith. Christ is risen, Christ is ascended, Christ is head of His Church, Christ is Lord of all the earth. Therefore, of course, this truth has burnt its way into us, we cannot but keenly feel that each moment a new life opens, a new treasure is uncovered. What is it that will open? What will the Master do with it? Oh, if only we might know. And never surely since the Renaissance first broke in upon Christendom has there been a time when there was more to provoke such an inquiry than now. The years are hurrying upon us, loaded with fresh and unanticipated wonders, new gifts, new possibilities, new endowments, new knowledge, new aspirations, new modes of literature, new moods of art, all are poured out in profusion. Some work in the Church has been given us to do—feed His sheep, tend His lambs; we are aglow, we are athirst. Right ahead we see stretching a blessed path laid out for us to walk in right to the end. All through life we shall in this way be busy in fulfilling what are the clearest parts of His will. We ask of others who, like ourselves, are loyal to the Master's service, 'Lord, what shall these do? Let us understand their part. How will they work in with us?' So we ask, and our eagerness is always brought up by a violent check. These others are always travelling along ways we cannot quite comprehend. Even when their devotion to Christ is plain to us, their purpose and their use is hidden. What are they at? He has urgent work, no doubt, for us to do, but all the time He is also engaged in looking ahead, in securing for Himself the service of those who will bear their fruit in the years to come. And these He will keep back; He will not hurry them; they will tarry long before their value is felt; many, many years hence it will be seen what He was doing with them. Let the men of action be satisfied to throw their energies out to the living present, let them leave alone to their own proper destiny the brooding hearts which are held in reserve for the slow hereafter. By his own Master each standeth or falleth, by his own Master and by no other he is judged, and the Master needs an infinite variety of men, none may interfere with another, none, however great, may impose his own type on another. To each there is but one final word, 'Follow thou Me.' Whatever those others have to do, however much they puzzle and bewilder you, yet back to us comes this oft-repeated adequate command, 'Thou who knowest thine own task, who hast received thine own commission, follow thou Me.'

H. SCOTT HOLLAND.

HOLY DAYS

THE HOLY INNOCENTS' DAY

Scriptures Proper for the Day.

FOR THE EPISTLE, . . .	REV. XIV. 1-5.
GOSPEL, ...	S. MATT. II. 13-18.
FIRST MORNING LESSON, .	JEREMIAH XXXI. 1-18.
FIRST EVENING LESSON, .	BARUCH IV. 21-31.

The Three Mighty Men.

And three of the thirty chiefs went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam; and the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim. And David was then in an hold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Beth-lehem. And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate! And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord. And he said, Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this: is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mighty men. 2 SAM. xxiii. 13-17.

'AND David longed, and said, 'Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!' This story of the deed of the three mighty men is one that it does us good to hear, even for its own sake. The sight of human goodness is always good for men; and here we see displayed manifold goodness, and that of the sort easiest to discern. Not only the fearless bravery of the three men themselves,—that seems an easy and commonplace virtue compared with the rest,—but their tender and loving loyalty towards their chief, the way that they heeded his least word, and grudged no toil or danger for the satisfying his wishes. And in David also we may notice, not only the religious generosity of his offering the water before the Lord, but the tender home-sickness that led to the wish he uttered at first. In the wilderness, a wanderer and an outcast, he cared not to drink of the water that came nearest, for mere natural thirst of the body. He thirsted with a nobler, a spiritual thirst. We read the psalm which he wrote at this time, 'when he was in the Wilderness of Judah:' it begins, 'O God, Thou art my God, early will I seek Thee. My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth greatly after Thee, in a barren and dry land where no water is.' And even where, as in the text, we find a

more merely human and natural longing in his heart, it is still a desire, not for self-pleasing only, but for memories of love. What he longed for was something that should speak to him of the home of his childhood; his thoughts ran back to the well of Bethlehem that was beside the gate.

I. To-day our minds are turned, as David's was, to the memories of Bethlehem; and if we consider the likeness between David and the Son of David, we may not find it unfitting to remember this act of David's life, and consider it as a type of what the true Champion and King of Israel has done, and what His soldiers and servants have done for Him. To-day we keep the memory, not of mighty men after the flesh, but of Christ's little ones; but let no one say that we have no right here to look for mighty deeds.

'Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.' These little ones who died for Christ have done a great and mighty work for Him, which He who seeth not as man seeth is sure not to despise. In David's own life it was seen and known that it is not age and stature, but faith and innocence, that are the parents of might; much more may we look to have this manifest in the spiritual kingdom of the Son of David. Here at least those words of the prophet will be fulfilled: 'He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles: they shall run, and not be weary: and they shall walk, and not faint.' In these three saints' days, which come together, next to the feast of our Lord's own birth, we see how His least are enabled to do the same work with Him as His mightiest: these little ones of Bethlehem yielded up their lives to Jesus, like S. Stephen and S. John; we couple their memory with theirs as martyrs, and are not afraid to ascribe to them a like glory: we sing of the martyrs' victory, and say, 'These things did the three mighty men.'

II. For the service done to David by his soldiers is no unfit image of what is done for Jesus by His. We may notice particularly where David was at the time of this story. He was in the hold, at the cave of Adullam, in the wilderness of Judah; and further back in the books of Samuel we read what was his manner of life there—an outcast himself, yet a refuge and a deliverer to others. In this he was a likeness of Him who came down into the wilderness of this world, and in it had not where to lay His head; yet who said, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,'—the rest that He had not found for Himself; Him of whom the Prophet cried, 'Thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the

needy in his distress; a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.'

III. But one might ask, How is it possible for one of us to do for our commander what David's mighty men did for theirs? What want has He that it is in our power to supply? We might ask it, Had not He Himself told us when it is that He is thirsty and we can give Him drink: 'Inasmuch as ye did unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me.' And there are those who have refreshed the longing soul of Jesus, not with water only, but with their blood, in the jeopardy of their lives; who for His body's sake, which is the Church, filled up that which was behind of the sufferings of Christ, by that which they suffered in their own body. Those who have died, like S. Stephen, for His name and testimony; those who have died, or who, like S. John, have lived, for charity to His brethren on the earth, and the profit and edification of His Church,—these, as well as the little ones who died for Him in the days of His flesh, have done a work for Jesus that His own heart rejoices to see done. Not that He seeks His own delight or profit, but theirs; His longing is still for their salvation as when He thirsted upon the Cross. He will not drink Himself of what they bring Him; but be sure that when the life-blood of Christ's servant is thus brought to Him, it is united in His hands with the virtue of His own atoning blood; poured out by Him before the Lord, it is in nowise wasted, but is accepted as a pure and holy drink-offering by His God and Father.

It will be well for us to thirst as David thirsted, to be afflicted in all wherein our Captain was afflicted; He will love us all the better if our hearts lead us to cry as His did, 'Oh that one would give me to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem!' For to us also, as to Him, Bethlehem is our childhood's home; our life's first memory has its beginning with the well that is beside the gate. So it was with Him: 'This is He who came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; and not by water only,' but yet 'by water' as well as 'by blood.' We, if we give Him not our blood in jeopardy of our lives, are at least partakers with Him in the water. 'I have a baptism to be baptized with,' He said, 'and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!' 'Can ye drink of the Cup that I shall drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?' 'We can,' said S. John and his brother, and drank of His Cup to the dregs. So not S. James only drank of it, but S. Stephen and all the martyrs, and the Holy Innocents, were baptized with His baptism—the baptism of their own blood. We, if not as like to Him as they were, yet in our sacraments are made partakers with them in Him; in our prayers and charity, in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, we

are all partakers of their grace. We look to the rock whence we were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence we were digged; from the cares of life, the joys and sorrows of life, yea, even after the sins of life, we look back to the grace of our baptism, to the water of the well of Bethlehem that is by the gate. There was a time when we were purified as Christ is pure, when we were numbered, if not among the martyrs, at least among the Holy Innocents. Wanderers as we are in the wilderness, distressed, in debt, discontented, we would fain recall the time when we were children by the sheepfolds, not burdened with the cares of the prince of this world which come to nought, but free with the princely heart of innocence. Can we recall that time, or is it lost for ever? It is all in vain when we cry, 'Oh that one would give me to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem?'

Here on earth, it may be, we must bear our thirst. What is past cannot be recalled: the guilty may be forgiven, but they cannot be innocent. We cannot draw water out of the well of Bethlehem that is beside the gate; we must stay where we are, in a barren and dry land where no water is. But there is a better drink hereafter, which shall not be denied to those that are thirsty here. 'Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God: when shall I come to appear before the presence of God?' The presence of God will relieve our wants: we can scarcely look for relief short of it.

W. H. SIMCOX

The Spirit of the World Exemplified in Herod.

S. Matthew ii. 16.

I. HEROD did not look on the birth of Jesus as the salvation of the world. He only thought of what his own power and dignity would lose by the birth of one who would set up, as he supposed, to be the King of the Jews in his place. His share in this world, he thought, was going from him; and no wonder that he, having his heart set on no better world, should be troubled and vexed in spirit. If we even allow ourselves to dispute God's will, and to keep a hold of what displeases Him, for this world's sake, we are beginning to give way to Herod's sin; we are then troubled at hearing that Christ is born; that God has interfered, to hinder our taking as much as we please of the delights and vanities of this world.

II. The next thing the troubled King does, is to put on a show of love for our Saviour. Just so. The worst enemies of Jesus Christ, those who crucify Him afresh by their sins, do very seldom declare

openly that they have any sort of dislike of Him. Herod sought the young Child to destroy Him; and sinners too often study the will of Christ in the Scriptures, with no other purpose than to make it bad, if they can, by finding in it excuses for their sins.

III. This crime did Herod no good whatever. Do what we will against the truth, we are certain to recommend and forward it in the end. We bear witness to it in spite of ourselves, by living such lives as God foretold His enemies should, and finally coming to such miserable ends as He threatened them with. Once use yourself to endeavour at escaping God's law, and there is no end to the sin and misery into which you will plunge yourself.

J. KEBLE.

The Holy Innocents.

Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst, etc.
S. MATTHEW xviii. 2, 3.

IT is not out of place to-day to remind one's-self of the majesty with which childhood is invested in the gospel; to collect the scattered rays of glory which encircle it, and make them converge to a point.

I. Look at the innocence of little children. Fresh from the waters of baptism, the laver of regeneration, they are worthy to be companions to the holy angels. Theirs is the life spiritual, unsullied as yet by the life natural. Consider next, as intelligence begins to dawn, their guilelessness and simplicity; their trustfulness and confiding faith; their truthfulness. They forgive most readily and forget right soon. They are ever hopeful. The memory of past sorrow passes from them with incredible swiftness; and straightway the mirror is as bright as ever. Is it fanciful to note the very slender hold they have on the things of earth? Their hold upon the things of earth is, at all events, speedily relaxed; while possessions, infancy has none.

II. Viewed as a part of the entire scheme of God's providential love, there seems to be more than tender beauty and fine catholic instinct and gospel grace in this Feast of the Holy Innocents—this day kept in honour of the babes of Bethlehem, whereby God caused infants to glorify Him by their deaths. There was the further design of administering a yearly word of consolation, in this way, to parents. Scarcely a family is there in which some blossoms of hope have not been snatched away before they opened into flowers of promise, or ripened into fruits of joy. A balm has been provided in this day's commemoration for the heart of many a mother whose tale of sorrow

could not, from the very nature of the case, win for her much sympathy from strangers. The Church's honour consoles her for the world's indifference. J. W. BURGON.

The Song of the Holy Innocents.

And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. REVELATION xiv. 3.

CHRISTMAS DAY is followed abruptly, and almost sharply, by three martyrdoms, if we may so call them, each typical of some victory, in the followers of the Holy Child, over pain, sorrow, and death, each typical of that self-sacrifice which the Saviour of mankind has demanded in all ages and has never failed to receive. There stands S. Stephen with the gold of his martyrdom, S. John with the frankincense of a life of devotion—martyr in will if not in deed—and there stand the Holy Innocents with the bitter healing myrrh of simple suffering, a phenomenon so strange in the world's roll of achievements, a commemoration so unique in the Church's calendar, that it seems at once to challenge our investigation and reverent inquiry. Why, when heaven is yet ringing with the bright message of peace, does the wailing of Ramah, of Bethlehem, shriek in upon it with discordant jar? Why, at a time like this, when Christianity hastens to surround with its holy joy the beauty of childhood and the sanctity of home, are our hearts torn with the memory of those desolated families and unmerited pain? Why does He, the all-loving and all-merciful Jesus, leave these little ones to the sword of Herod, and the blind fury of his soldiers, while He flees into Egypt and escapes their wrath? Perhaps in all these things we ask amiss, starting from wrong premises and working to false conclusions. God does not think as we do about pain; that is evident. God does not sanction the abiding memories of a home here. God's fashion is another. Whom He loves the most He seeks not oftenest, and in forgetting best remembers him. The ancient world knew something of this, or its cognate mystery: 'Those whom the gods love die young.' And therefore, perhaps, the words of to-day's epistle may suggest our attitude while feeling after the teaching of the Holy Spirit on this festival—a teaching which may too easily elude us—and may help us to gaze at much which is clearly a mystery in a region where it is all too easy to go wrong.

I. The Apostle in that part of his vision which I have just read is contemplating, you remember, a great company standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion, worshipping before the Throne, and from that

Throne proceeds a voice as of many waters, and the voice of a great thunder. And it may be that the teaching of Holy Innocents' Day is part of the new song of the Church which comes forth from the Throne of God. For, in the first place, it is the song of infant wailing, an inarticulate cry, the song of those 'whose only language is a cry,' a cry of pain, of anguish, and of misery. All who came near Christ more or less suffered by approaching Him, just as if earthly trouble and pain went out of Him, as some precious virtue, for the good of their soul.

We are in a world where to cease to suffer would be like the last stage of mortification, where the patient feels no pain. He gave us the motive of this weary song of suffering when He told us that suffering is a cross.

We, many of us at all events, have such capacities for earthly happiness that we should grow to this earth, and take its colour and its form, if there were no pain to elevate us. See the soul tearing, straining to be free, held down on earth with cords and stays which check its upward soaring. One after another God snaps them, first this and then that, by suffering, until the spirit flies away, lifted up from the earth and free. While to others at all events, perhaps to these mothers at Bethlehem to-day, He gives this awful privilege, to be patterns, to be images, as it were, of the Crucified, to show people how to bear, lest they faint under the burden of life's healing pain. Yes, surely this is part of the new song of Holy Innocents' Day,—the true meaning of suffering in the economy of the world.

II. They sung, as it were, a new song. The song that mounts up before the throne to-day is also, so to speak, a song without words. It tells of no great achievements, no mighty actions. It tells of nameless fame, of passionless renown, of the glorious blessing of innocency as one of the choicest treasures of heaven. There is no other strain like it. Imperfection mingles with the song and the glory of the greatest martyrs. S. Peter has to tell of his shameless denial; S. Paul of his misguided zeal; S. James and S. John of a spirit which called down rebuke; S. Thomas of a halting faith. But these are without fault before the throne of God. The honour bestowed on little children—the honour which belongs to innocency—is another distinguishing mark of Christianity, the new song which the Church has tried to learn.

Is the Holy Innocents' Day put there simply to daunt us, and to kindle remorse, and aggravate our loss? No, we can in a sense make ourselves young again. We can go straight to our Father's home, and ask Him to teach us instead of this weary world, whose gospel is every day altering, where the mistakes of one generation are the sport of the next, and whose reed-like support goes through the hand and

pierces it; we can go straight to God, and ask Him, 'Lord, what wouldst Thou have me to do?' Yes, and we can shut up that book of evil; if we dream of it, if a sinful memory haunts us still, we can read no more. Still, we can satisfy our mind with right and proper food, and close the door to evil, while we listen anxiously to catch that strain, inarticulate and even painful as it seems to us, knowing that to those who hear, to those who understand it, it is well worth the learning.

W. C. E. NEWBOLT.

Of Such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. REVELATION xiv. 4.

I. WE cannot but see a great propriety in the passage which the Church has always applied to this day, where the Holy Innocents are spoken of as 'the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.' The very expression of 'the Lamb' of itself indicates this; they are 'first-fruits to the Lamb,' they are 'with the Lamb on Mount Sion,' they 'follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.' If our blessed Saviour had been spoken of by any other expression, this suitableness would not have so strongly appeared. And indeed the very event itself which the description alludes to, and which we commemorate on this day, is the wonderful language of God; it speaks with a miraculous and divine tongue more powerfully than human words; it sets forth the nature of His kingdom in the kingly attendants born with Him; the pure in heart that shall see God; those that are persecuted for His sake, whose reward is great in heaven; the little ones whom He invites to Him, saying, that of such is the kingdom of heaven; the weak things of the world which He hath chosen to confound the strong; in babes and sucklings the glory and strength of His kingdom. He appears—the King of the true Israel, and while yet in the cradle He overcomes Herod on his throne, by making those whom he would destroy the first-fruits of His heavenly kingdom, the very types of His redeemed.

'The Angel of the Lord,' says S. Matthew, 'appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young Child and His Mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.' Will seek Him, because the star in heaven, and worship from afar, the oracles of God in Jerusalem, declare Him to be divinely born; therefore He will seek Him, not to adore, but to destroy. So strange the mystery of iniquity in the human heart! The mystery of godliness also surrounds His birth; for to be allied to Him is to share His woes:

to be His mother or foster-parent is to have to flee from country and home; the stable and the manger are to be exchanged for hardship yet more severe: to be by any sympathies connected with Him is to suffer; to approach Him in time and place of birth is to die. But all this is clothed with the events of human circumstance, enshrining therein a lesson to ourselves, that we fret not nor repine at accident that bring on us pain and discomfort, but recognise in them that hand of God which He laid most severely on His own Son.

II. When Rachel at her tomb in Bethlehem mourned for her children taken into captivity, she was bidden to refrain from weeping, for those her 'children shall come again from the land of the enemy,' and in their 'end there is hope.' So it is ever with the Israel of God; their death is the pledge of life; their captivity leads to the glorious liberty of God's children; their God turns night into morning, and heaviness into joy. And if so in the types going before, much more in these that attend on Christ Himself! For them the weeping Rachel is forbidden to mourn; for they shall come again from the land of the enemy, and these, the first-fruits of His humiliation, 'shall God bring with Him' in His glorious coming. Their light affliction is but for a moment, their crown an exceeding weight of glory. 'Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears.' The Lord Himself, we may add, 'shall wipe away all tears from their eyes,' where 'there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying.' These are, indeed, both the first-fruits and the types of those that are His; and in His goings forth on earth to subdue the enemy such as these shall be with Him: 'they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth;' it is through these that He overcomes the world—by those who are as little children—by those who suffer—His followers who are without guile—unarmed and inoffensive as lambs—as sheep in the midst of wolves—by those who are not of the world He overcomes the world; and in such weakness is His strength perfected: by those who are born not of the will of man, but of God.

'Not by speaking, but by dying,' says the ancient collect, 'have they confessed Christ.' 'Stephen,' says S. Bernard, 'was a martyr among men; John may be considered so in the sight of angels, to whom by spiritual signs his devotion was known; but these are martyrs with God, for neither to men nor angels is their merit known, but commended to God alone in the prerogative of His singular grace.'

There is a mystery in the Cross of Christ, which every thoughtful person knows, from his own experience, that we never so much feel and understand that God is love as when He most heavily afflicts us. God is love; and to know that He is love is the life of the redeemed;

He that is the life is also the way, and the way and the life is Christ crucified; and therefore, to suffer is to be brought near unto God,—near to Him who is love, and therefore to know His love. Thus Bethlehem, that it may be honoured as the birthplace of Christ, is known to all times as the place of weeping parents and dying children.

I. WILLIAMS.

THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST.

Scriptures Proper for the Day.

EPISTLE	ROM. IV. 8-14.
GOSPEL	S. LUKE II. 15-21.
FIRST MORNING LESSON .	GEN. XVII. 9 TO END.
SECOND MORNING LESSON .	ROM. II. 17 TO END.
FIRST EVENING LESSON . .	DEUT. I. 12 TO END.
SECOND EVENING LESSON .	COL. II. 8-18.

Joy out of Suffering.

Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. JOB xiii. 15.

THE world begins this day with glad greetings, and words of hope, and preparations of joy, and undefined looking and longing for future excitement and greater joy in store. Its Saviour begins it with suffering and humiliation, the first shedding of His redeeming Blood, foredating its full outpouring on Calvary, and His humbling Himself to the death of the Cross.

I. To feel a nearness of God, even in chastisement, is a deeper, stiller, awful indeed, yet more thrilling joy, than the intensest, or the most even tide of joy, on which the soul rested, even as the gift of God. Even in the most penetrating of this life's chastisements, God replaces His gifts with the hope of Himself. Chastisement is blessed to the trusting soul, because, though an awful form of His presence, it is His presence. 'The Lord,' saith the Psalmist, 'hath chastened and corrected me, but He hath not given me over unto death.' His very chastening is a token to the soul that it is not abandoned. And gladlier often to the bereaved soul is this one token, than all besides is heavy. What is the intensest blackness, if His bow be in it and span it, and enfold and measure its height and breadth of darkness, by the unfoldings of His light, the radiant, glorious pledge of His lovingkindness? To feel is to live. To know that one is

chastened is to know that one is not abandoned. Be any what he may, he feels that he is a son yet. The deeper the iron enters, the deeper, he knows, is the sore which God would lay open and heal; yet the deeper too the mercy of God, who gives not over what needeth so deep a cure. So true is that which even a heathen saw from nature, 'he draweth strength and courage from the very sword' which wounds him. Here too, indeed, is there need of faith and hope. For even these very chastisements of God, when they do not soften, harden. They, like every gift of God, yea, the very gospel of His Son and the tidings of redemption, are a savour of 'life unto life,' or of 'death unto death.'

II. The beginnings of conversion mostly have sweetness, whereby God allures the soul from the deadening sweetness whereby it destroyed itself. 'Gracious is God,' saith a holy man, 'who doth not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, nor alloweth the worm of conscience to infest us beyond measure. And especially in the beginnings of conversion, He sootheth our ulcers wiith the oil of mercy; that neither the amount of the disease, nor the difficulty of the cure, should become known to it, more than is beneficial; yea, rather a sort of ease smileth, as it were, upon it, which afterward disappeareth when it hath its senses exercised, and thereon, perhaps, strife is appointed to it.'

Whether for the Church or for ourselves, let us not take ourselves into our own hands, or choose our own lot. 'My times are in Thy hands.' He loveth the Church, which He died to purchase, His own body, and all the members of His own body, better than we can; He loveth us better and more wisely than we ourselves. He who made us loveth us better than we who unmade ourselves; He who died for us, better than we who destroyed ourselves; He who would sanctify us for a holy temple unto Himself, better than we who defiled what He hallowed.

E. B. PUSEY.

The Name of Jesus.

His name was called Jesus. S. Luke ii. 21.

'WHAT is in a name?' So we are fond of amusing ourselves with asking, in the shallowest and least earnest of our sceptical moods. It tickles our conceit to fancy that we are superior to such an external accident as the form and spelling of a name. And yet human experience and human history are all dead against our light scoff; these proclaim with every tongue the immense significance of names.

HOLY DAYS

Many a cause never survives the imposition of its nickname; it sinks under the laughter or enmity which is thus evoked against it. The bad name succeeds, and the dog is hung. And, on the other hand, one of the great fascinations of history is to watch a strong and deep movement, which has been met by this enemy, bearing up against the adverse stress which the bad name has brought down upon it—refusing to succumb, nay, adopting the very name of scorn as a badge of its defiance, and bearing it on its flag till victory has purged it of its poisonous intentions and has transformed it into the dearest title which its adherents can claim or express. 'Puritan,' 'Methodist,' 'Whig,' 'Tory'—these are names which have survived the scorn in which they were given, and have become the battle-cries around which men rally.

Human experience verifies thus at every turn the force and reality of a name, and we shall not be surprised, therefore, to find that the Bible, which clings so close to human experience, believes profoundly in names. The name is one of the root words in the Bible from beginning to end, and always it is used to convey the most intense and vivid reality.

I. And this reality is, in Biblical language, at all events, primarily personal. A person alone can, in the full force of the term, possess a 'name,' and, so far as we allot names to inanimate things, to hills and to mountains, to cities and rivers, we find that we have practically personified them. Such was 'Jerusalem' to the Jew, as he lingered over the name—the scene of 'The Virgin Daughter,' or of 'The Lady of Sorrows,' or of 'The Bride of Light.' A name is a distinctive mark of a person, and the Name of Names, therefore, belongs to the Supreme Personality—God. The name of God! 'My name shall go before them.' 'He made the name of the Lord to pass before him.'

'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' In that name He has made it manifest to us what He is and what He would do; by that name He has laid His strong hands on our human story and reversed its direction and re-fashioned its form. And now that name, we say, abides for ever as the sole instrument through which His authority reaches over every man; and all His Church is but the body by which He puts out for ever the vitality of the name, signing it on the forehead, sealing it on the heart—the name of the Lamb of God.

II. Is there power still in that name? Has it lost its ancient supremacy? Men, we know, are asking such questions anxiously and piteously as they look about them on the surface of our earth, that shows but too little evidence of its intention to bow at the name of Jesus, or to place that name above every name. Let us venture

to-day to recall at least for our comfort in what manner the mere power of the name is working among us to-day, and how sorely we need its efficacy to prevail yet again, as our forefathers have told us of it. What does it do for us? What is its actual effect to-day?

1. First, merely as a fact—merely as a memory—the name of Jesus stands behind all who are poor, hungry, outcast, forlorn; and forces them forward into public consideration. He, by being what He was, has made it for ever impossible that the poor shall always be forgotten. Behind the poor is a name, loud and strong, which compels the world to attend—a name which forces consideration; a name which the conscience cannot obliterate or ignore. The name has, by its unconquerable power, brought the poor up out of the darkness into the daylight. Christ has raised the level at which all discussion of the state of the poor must proceed. He has established a claim for them, which may be compromised or adjourned, but which can never be disputed. And though our present sufferings may disguise from us the full effect of that change, no one can really exaggerate the difference between a state of things when there was no established public conscience to appeal to in the matter of suffering and poverty, and a condition in which, however painful and disastrous it be, there be a moral necessity, which can always be asserted without risk of contradiction, compelling society at large to consider its poor in the name of Jesus—the poor man's friend.

2. But that name is not only a memory of Him who, by His appearance among men eighteen hundred years ago, created a new conscience. It works not only behind the poor as a memory, but within society as a force, which vindicates for each separate soul its value in the sight of God and man. Each has it in him to become in Him a child of God. It is the name of Jesus which historically has created this estimate of the worth of each individual man, by which each is endowed with his own singular dignity and hope. And what Jesus so created He still asserts. By His unceasing declaration each man has it in him to become by grace a child of God, each has it in him to become a ministering and active member in His living body.

The name of Jesus! That is what we want to have beneath us, as an energy, lodged within our innermost self—stirring where all was stagnant—a voice where all was dumb—a fire where all was frozen—a life where all was dead. Thank God, the name still lives—is still at our disposal—still can put out its ancient power.

H. SCOTT HOLLAND.

HOLY DAYS

The Old and the New Man.

And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham. ROMANS iv. 12.

I. THE eighth day, the day of Christ's Resurrection, the first day of the new creation, this may be like the beginning of the New Year to a Christian, the new everlasting year, whereby, being dead with Christ, he is alive unto God. Let us therefore combine together the two considerations which come before us on this day. The first, because it is the Circumcision, and we pray that as Christ was circumcised and obedient to the law for man, God would grant us the true circumcision of the Spirit, that our hearts may be mortified from all worldly desires, so that we may in all things obey the blessed will of God.

The other consideration is that of the New Year's Day, which comes before us as inhabiters of this world, telling us that another short year of our earthly pilgrimage is at an end, that we are fast drawing on to the bounds of our appointed course, bringing our years to an end, as it were a tale that is told; that as many are now numbered with the dead who began life since we did, and many who were not expecting such an awful change this time last year; so we, though we now little think of it, may, ere this year closes upon us, be departed from this scene, where no eye shall see us more.

II. The day of the Circumcision tells us that to follow Christ we must be in a manner dead to this world while we are in it; that we must not seek to do our own will or follow our own pleasure, if we would learn to love God now and be with Him hereafter. If this seems a hard saying, let us ask the world what it has to promise. It will tell us, as on this day, that if we fix our hearts upon anything on earth, it will very soon depart from us, or we shall depart from it and leave it behind. A consideration of the fleetness of our days which a New Year brings to our minds tells us that the time of our stay is so uncertain, and so short at the longest, that it really matters very little what we have and what we have not, what we may suffer or what we may enjoy, if only we may be admitted at last into the blessed kingdom of God's rest.

The gospel tells us on this day that we have no business with such desires and disappointments as the world brings, for we have been bound to renounce them long ago, that we may have our hearts and treasure elsewhere.

Is it the love of riches which occupies the heart, a desire to obtain a little more than we have, under all the various shapes in which such

a desire attempts to hide itself? If with such dispositions we look to the world, it will tell us that riches will not keep off the hand of sickness and of death. And such a reflection may well dispose us to attend to the gospel warning, that we must make ourselves little and low by mortification, and small in our own eyes by repentance, and small in the eyes of others by poverty of spirit, before we shall be able to enter at the narrow gate.

Is it any little worldly ease and comfort which we look for, as if our home was in this world and our rest was here? The swift passing year will tell us that as winter follows the summer, and autumn the spring, as day follows night, and evening quickly succeeds to the morning, as the sun, and moon, and stars are all hurrying away by turns; and trees, and animals, and rivers are all hastening away, and nothing is at rest; so is there no rest for man. So fast does manhood follow on youth, and old age on manhood, and death on old age. But this festival, which explains to us the true meaning of the Circumcision, bids us to mortify all desires of the natural man, and with them our natural cravings for rest and comfort in this world, in order that we may be in Christ 'a new creature.' And our blessed Saviour Himself, who in taking the name of Saviour began life by suffering, as on this day, has solemnly warned us that if any man would find rest in Him he must deny himself as He did. For thus is fulfilled in the Spirit that which in the mere letter sounded so awful of old, that he who was not circumcised was to be cut off from his people, and had broken the covenant of God.

III. So far as we look for satisfaction in things temporal, another year passing over our heads must bring with it many melancholy reflections. But if any one is steadfastly purposed to follow Christ with the aid of His blessed Spirit, and in all things to deny his own will in order to be conformed to the will of God, to him every passing year may afford encouragement and satisfaction, as it brings nearer to an end that state in which he must die daily, in order that he may live eternally.

Such is the true circumcision of the Spirit by which the Christian becomes a new creature.

Every year that has borne him onward in his course as it goes by is indeed a call to him for more active exertion, for more steadfastly setting his face toward the heavenly Jerusalem, to be more earnest and constant than he has ever yet been in the duties of religion; to forget the things that are behind, and to press forward more eagerly to that which is before, the prize of his high calling in Christ Jesus.

I. WILLIAMS.

HOLY DAYS

Submission.

Submit yourselves therefore to God. S. JAMES iv.

ON this day the Son of God submitted to receive that ordinance of the Jewish Church which meant that those who received it should through the rest of their lives submit their wills and desires to God.

Unless we have carefully looked into this great matter, we have not perhaps realised how submission to God runs through the whole of our religion, and is its spirit, so to speak.

I. Not only have we to submit our carnal desires to God, and our worldly hopes and prospects, so that all our life in this world and all our hopes and prospects should be guided and overruled by Him, but we have to submit our innermost religious thoughts and feelings to Him. I mean in this way particularly that we should acknowledge all in which we have to do with Him to come through His grace.

II. Our justification for certain comes entirely through His grace. Our sanctification comes entirely through His grace. 'Jesus Christ,' as the Apostle says, 'is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' In the matter of our religious life, we are to take credit to ourselves for nothing.

And the same must be said respecting our intellectual faculties. We must submit our reason and our intellect to God, not for a moment casting aside our own rational faculties, but remembering at every step that we have to do with the revelation of an Infinite Being, so that when He has revealed anything plainly, it is the height of folly to ask, how can this be? We should constantly have on our lips the words of the Psalmist, 'Lord, I am not high-minded. I have no proud looks. I do not exercise myself in great matters which are too high for me, but I refrain my soul, and keep it low like as a child that is weaned from his mother; yea, my soul is even as a weaned child' (Psalm cxxxi.).

M. F. SADLER.

HOLY DAYS

CONVERSION OF S. PAUL

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE	ACTS IX. 1-22.
GOSPEL	S. MATT. XIX. 27-30.
FIRST MORNING LESSON	ISAIAH XLIX. TO v. 13.
FIRST EVENING LESSON	JEREMIAH I. TO v. 11.
SECOND MORNING LESSON	GALATIANS I. TO v. 11.
SECOND EVENING LESSON	ACTS XXVI. TO v. 21.

The Self-Sacrifice of S. Paul.

Peter answered and said unto Jesus, Behold, we have forsaken all and followed Thee, what shall we have therefore? S. MATTHEW XIX. 27.

I. HESE words form the beginning of the gospel for the Festival of S. Paul; and they gave occasion to the promise of Christ that in the regeneration, when He should sit upon the throne of His glory, His Apostles should likewise sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel: and that not they only, but all who should for His sake give up worldly blessings and worldly possessions, should be abundantly rewarded, and made partakers of everlasting life. Hence it may be that the Church has chosen this passage for S. Paul's Day, calling us to consider what he, an Apostle not inferior to any of the twelve, gave up for the sake of Christ.

I think we sometimes forget this. The awful wonder of his vision, the extraordinary and sudden change from the violent persecutor to the devoted servant, so fill our thoughts that we overlook other circumstances connected with S. Paul, which are not perhaps without some teaching for us. What was the position of this man, before his conversion and after it? Could he have said, as S. Peter said in my text, 'Lo, we have left all and followed thee?' We do not indeed know much of his early life, but we do know something. A Jew by parentage, but by birth a citizen of Tarsus; a citizen, as he told the Roman captain, of no mean city; and as such, or it may be by inheritance from his father, enjoying all the rights and privileges of a citizen of imperial Rome; he certainly had achieved to himself a position of no little importance when the Christian Church was in

its infancy. He took a very leading part in the persecution it suffered, and was even able to get letters from the high priest authorising him to search for Christians at Damascus and to bring them bound to Jerusalem. All this points, if not to wealth, at least to a very high position at Jerusalem. His having a trade is no proof to the contrary, for we are told it was the usual custom of Jews in every rank of life to have their children taught a trade. We know that as regards his education he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, one of the greatest and most respected doctors of the law, and that he was well known among his fellow-countrymen as a strict Pharisee. We also can see that he was not entirely without Greek culture. But all his worldly advantages he at once sacrificed for the sake of following Christ: not indeed in quite the same sense as S. Peter uses the word, for he turned to the great Master, after He had ascended up to heaven, not while in His humility He dwelt among the sons of men: but for His service he gave up his friends, the Pharisees, those with whom he had lived, and with whom he had walked to the house of God: he gave up all the associations of his past life, he no longer dwelt in Jerusalem; he began a new course, among new associates, counting for loss all that up to that time had been gain to him.

II. 'Behold, we have forsaken all and followed Thee: what shall we have therefore?' All that the twelve had, they had willingly left for His sake—and they could not give up more. But we may fairly say that Saul gave up more than they did. They were not called to part from all those who were dear to them in this world: Saul, if we can judge rightly, was called upon to do this, and did it: they were gradually trained to reject, one after another, their narrow Jewish prejudices—he had suddenly to change, or submit to the change, of the whole current of his thoughts. And what was to be the result—what the reward of this self-abnegation? To the twelve it was promised that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man should sit upon the throne of His glory, they should sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. What special dignity is prepared for Paul we know not, except that he tells us that a crown of glory is reserved for him—but our Lord declared of all His followers that whosoever should for His name's sake forsake houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, should receive an hundredfold, and should inherit everlasting life. Even in this world they should have a great reward.

Can we see any such reward in the case of S. Paul? Surely we can. He had sacrificed worldly position: has he not attained to a far higher worldly position? We cannot indeed imagine such an one as he was, caring for worldly fame, but if he could have done so might

we not say that of that crowd who stoned Stephen all are now forgotten save one? and he, not for the part he took then, proud of it, doubtless, as he then was, but for the years he spent following in Stephen's footsteps as a preacher, ended, like Stephen's life, with martyrdom. Hence his name is great among men; hence, at this festival, his praise is resounding far and wide. He gave up the love and companionship of a few proud Pharisees, and gained the love of a multitude of devoted followers in many parts of the Roman empire. He gave up his cherished convictions of the righteousness to be found in the law, interpreted as the Pharisees interpreted it; and he learnt the truth as it was revealed to him by the Son of God Himself, for he tells us that he learned of the Lord those things which He delivered to His disciples, and not merely, as we might perhaps have expected, the deeper truths of the Christian faith, the mysteries of the Trinity in unity, and of the Incarnation, but even the events of Christ's life on earth, such as His institution of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Surely even in this life he received a hundredfold for all he had given up, little as he might have expected such a reward.

III. Let me, in conclusion, try to draw some practical teaching for ourselves from the circumstances of S. Paul's life which we have been considering. Of course the most obvious thought that occurs to us is their importance as evidences of the truth of Christianity. The book of the Acts of the Apostles is accepted as, on the whole, a truthful record by most of those who are inclined on the grounds of what is called the higher criticism to reject a great part of the New Testament. In that book we find this man Saul, or, as he was afterwards called, Paul, at first a violent persecutor of the Church, afterwards the most active propagator of the Christian faith. And when we examine the matter more closely, we find that his change of opinion involved the greatest sacrifices of worldly position and honour, of old friendships and associations, of carefully formed and earnestly cherished beliefs. We are indeed told how this change was made, and when we read of his vision and all that accompanied it, we can no longer wonder at the effect it produced: but had the evangelist omitted all mention of the miracle, and only described to us Saul's setting forth for Damascus with the high priest's letters, and preaching Christ within a few days of his arrival in that city, we might have ventured to call him as a most unprejudiced and a most well-informed and trustworthy witness of the truths of Christianity.

But I think we may draw a more personal and a more practical lesson from the story. For if S. Paul comes under the general description of those who are rewarded because they have made sacri-

Christ Jesus a new creation. All carnal affections, in that conversion, were dead in him, and all things belonging to the Spirit lived and grew in him. Now all carnal affections sum themselves up in three things—our sensual passions, our pride, and our self-will.

I. And, first of all, S. Paul in that captivity had been enabled to crucify the old man with his affections and lusts. Think not that it cost him no struggle. It is the greatest mistake in the world to suppose that an instantaneous conversion, when it occurs, will save any one of us from the long warfare in which there is no discharge. Thousands have experienced the blessedness of Christ's words that it is better to enter into life halt and maimed and blind—better to cut off the right hand and pluck out the right eye, rather than to leave in ourselves the occasion of stumbling, rather than to feel all through life the gnawing of the worm of habit and the quenchless flame of carnal temptation. And so glad was S. Paul that Christ had thus led him in triumph that he could at last appeal to his own example as that of one who had found grace to be faithful, who had acquired in patience his mortal body, and who had secured a grand and tranquil empire over his immortal soul.

II. And this conquest over passion in order to be perfect, needs also the conquest over the subtle, the more deeply lying sin of pride. Paul had been a perfect failure, with all the disdainful self-sufficiency of a worthless culture; but he knew now that God cannot endure the high look or the proud stomach, even when they rise from our supposed religious accuracies and perfections; that without humility we are none of Christ's, nor can advance one step towards the attainment of His truth. S. Paul bowed his haughty intellect to pluck that violet which blossoms only at the foot of Christ's Cross. And so be well assured it must be with us. Heaven's gate is not so highly arched as princes' palaces, and he that would enter there must not only bow his head, but enter on his knees.

III. And, lastly, with his pride and his passions, S. Paul, when led in triumph by Christ, gave up also his very will. Henceforth his whole life was God's. He left it altogether for God to arrange and to decide everything for him. Come life, come death, come poverty or wealth, come sickness or health, come what will, so it be the will of God. Henceforth he chose his own path no longer. He followed in the steps of Jesus bearing His cross. How few of us do thus absolutely resign ourselves, our souls and bodies, into the hands of God! How few of us do practically recognise that one factor of our lives is completely in God's hands and not in ours! How few of us win that sweet grace of perfect contentment which is another name for faith in God, and without which there can be in this life no perfect peace! But if we do but

resign ourselves to Christ, if, like S. Paul, we can thank God that He leadeth us in triumph, how blessed shall we be; how, by losing our life, shall we find it; how, by resigning all, shall we regain it a hundredfold, even though it be with persecution. Believe me, he who is not led with triumph in God's triumph will be in another. If you are not going to allow yourselves to be led in triumph by Christ, then you will be led in triumph by Satan, if not in a service which is perfect freedom, then in a false freedom, which is servitude.

ARCHDEACON FARRAR.

THE PURIFICATION OF S. MARY THE VIRGIN.

Scriptures proper to the Day.

EPISTLE	MALACHI III. 1-5.
GOSPEL	S. LUKE II. 22-40.
FIRST MORNING LESSON	EXODUS XIII. 6, 17.
FIRST EVENING LESSON	HAGGAI II. 7-9.
SECOND LESSONS . . .	ORDINARY.

Some Aspects of the Presentation in the Temple.

And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his Mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against: (yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. S. LUKE ii. 34-35.

THIS festival is one of two which belong in subject as in time to the Epiphany season; for each is concerned with a striking moment in the divine manifestation. The first commemorates the 'revelation of the Son of God in' him who was to be the Apostle of the Gentiles, the selection by God's providence of the 'vessel of choice' through which the light was to shine in the great centres of the world's commerce and government, and to illuminate in a hundred ways the paths of its future thinking.

The incident which the present festival recalls is of a different kind. Its interest is prophetic rather than historical; but for that reason perhaps it is even deeper and wider. It speaks more of the character of the revelation. It shows us the history as read beforehand in one flash of a prophet's insight. It turns the light upon our own hearts as well as on the course of the world.

I. Two points strike us in Simeon pre-eminently, whether they are marks of a school of Jewish interpretation or rather traits of a single soul, simpler and more receptive than most. One is, that starting merely with prophecy, and not concerned to image to himself the details of its fulfilment, he hears in it a note which hardly sounded as clearly even to Apostles; 'a light for the revelation of the Gentiles.' The other is, that the sadder and more mysterious tones of prophecy come back to him as well as the more triumphant ones —the 'stone of stumbling'—the 'gainsaying' people—the 'sword that is to awake against the Shepherd.'

This is not to say that he has put together in one harmonised picture the two sides of Messianic prophecy. That had not been done by the Apostles on the eve of the Resurrection. How hard a lesson it was, how slowly and imperfectly learnt, is written in the misgivings so tenderly argued with in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is rather true, and it is one of the inimitable touches of nature in the story, that the link to Simeon between the two aspects of what he sees is not one of intellectual apprehension, but of human feeling. He has spoken of the light and glory of Messiah's reign—spoken out of the fulness of his heart, and of his own vision of world-wide blessing. Even the Holy Child in his arms has been to him rather the symbol of the new epoch; its cause, doubtless, and centre, but the cause lost for the moment in the effect. Then, it seems, he looks on the faces of Joseph and Mary, and notices the wonder which his words have caused. And through them another side of the great coming crisis seems to strike him. He sees it as it touches not nations and races, but persons, the Holy Child, the mother's heart, the single lives which it may make or mar. He sees still the light, but it struggles through clouds. He sees risks as well as hopes, not peaceful acceptance of a beneficent rule, but doubt, resistance, mortal pain. When we ask ourselves how much his words to Mary imported, how far he saw into the mystery of the future, it is harder to answer. The story so far is a simple one, involving no marvel, properly so called. The links are natural and human. But it stands where it stands in God's providence. 'The Spirit of the Lord was upon him,' upon Simeon, and upon the narrator who set the story of Simeon's prophecy among the few reminiscences of the Holy Childhood in the sober and reticent narrative of the gospels. The Christian Church has made the 'Nunc Dimittis,' its daily evening hymn, the parable, the inspired expression of happy, satisfied, peaceful ending, of tasks fulfilled, of blessings accepted, of hope in departure. And so for the other part of his prophecy. It stands there at the outset of the gospel, the outline drawn beforehand of its earthly history. It is this that gives it its deepest interest to us. It stands as one of two

contrasted mottoes, before the opening chapter. It strikes one note of the two which will be heard again and again in the complicated harmonies to come. One is lost as well as the other in the thirty years of waiting and silence; but in the years of the ministry, neither is long out of our ears. 'My peace I give unto you;' and yet again, 'Not peace, but a sword.' 'I will draw all men unto Me,' and yet 'When the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith?' 'My yoke is easy,' and yet 'He that taketh not up his cross.' It is no mere picture of a returned golden age, of peace and restored innocence—rather of the carrying into close quarters, to more decisive issues of the 'war' which 'was in heaven.'

II. There is set then in the forefront of the new revelation, side by side with triumphant hopes and promises, the record of a prevision of limitation, drawbacks, it would seem, even of partial failure. These are accepted from the first as necessary conditions; accepted and proclaimed by the same prophetic voice which speaks most strongly of its satisfying, universal, eternal blessedness.

Prevision is not explanation, but when, in after years, we chafe at limitations, and puzzle and sadden over drawbacks and apparent failures, it is something to look back and see that nothing else was promised. 'The disciple is not above his Master.'

The Revealer must be allowed to mark the limits of His revelation. If the Bible had professed to remove the mystery of pain, the mystery of evil, the mystery of ignorance, it would fairly be charged with undertaking what it did not fulfil. But it tells us beforehand that it leaves these mysteries. In a sense, it even emphasises them; for it paints on every page the beneficence, holiness, and wisdom of the Almighty power in whose realm they exist. It deepens our feeling of the contrast; it shuts us out from the easy solutions which get rid of the difficulty by closing the eyes, and denying half the factors of it. It leaves the difficulties, even if it softens and explains them in part; and in any case it fortifies the soul to meet them in patience; it teaches it to sing, 'Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace,' even while it faces doubts that it cannot solve, and mysteries that hang heavy on the heart.

The words of Simeon touch three points which correspond roughly with three mysteries of human life. 1. He sees that the gospel is to bring pain as well as happiness—'A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also.' The nearer to Christ the surer and deeper the pain. 2. He sees that it is to be the occasion of evil as well as of good—to lower as well as to lift—to be the stone of stumbling as well as a ladder on which men may rise to heavenly places. 3. He sees that though it brings light, it is to be light that cannot make itself visible

to all eyes. It is to be a 'sign,' but one that is 'gainsaid.' It carries its witness, but the witness is not incontrovertible; it leaves room for doubt, denial, difference. Some words are added which seem as if they gave the purpose of these characteristics, 'that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.' It is not a purpose in the sense of a final aim. If we could see that, the mystery might be clear. But it is a grouping together of the immediate results, foreseen and desired, of the three limitations which bound the revelation. Pain, the necessity of choice, the discipline of uncertainty, these will test men's hearts, prove their sincerity, their rightmindedness, their patience, will reveal to themselves and others unknown capacities, latent harmonies and discords; they will sift, purify, educate.

Let me gather together the few thoughts which I have ventured to suggest to you upon Simeon's words. They do not stand alone in the New Testament—rather their echo is to be heard all through it—but they stand in a place that gives them some special force, in the prologue of the great Epiphany, and side by side with the hymn of satisfied and triumphant thankfulness.

They describe to us in terms of which, even if we may be tempted to read too particular meaning into special phrases, applying rather than interpreting, we can hardly over-estimate the general bearing, the subjection of the gospel message in its human history, to the conditions and limitations of human nature.

They may do something for us if they remind us that those limitations, whatever they are, were foreseen; a part of the divine plan—foreseen before the angels sang 'Peace on earth,' or prophets' voices welcomed the coming light and glory.

They may do more for us if they turn our thoughts to the practical side of such limitations, the side which touches our own life and duty. The gospel does not profess to explain to us why good cannot be without evil as its alternative, or why truth cannot come to us except through a fallible reason. But it warns us that these conditions throw a heavy and an inevitable responsibility upon ourselves. They are even, in a sense, designed to do so. 'That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.' That the steadfast may be sifted from the unstable, the single-hearted from the self-involved, the childlike from those whom the god of this world has blinded; yea, that even in the unstable may be found an inner core, a heart within the heart, the germ and promise of steadfastness; in the impure of purity; in the proud of humility; in the hardened and worldly of the child's unspoiled simplicity; may be found by the all-penetrating Eye, and touched by the wonder-working rod of divine grace, even so that 'in the wilderness waters may break out and streams in the desert.'

DEAN WICKHAM.

HOLY DAYS

The Child Jesus.

(*For Children.*)

And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him. S. Luke ii. 40.

I. FIRST of all the text says, 'the child'—that is, the child Jesus—'grew.' He grew in stature and He grew in character and goodness. He did not stand still. Although it was God Himself who was revealed to us in the life of Jesus Christ, yet this did not prevent Him from being made like unto us in all things, sin only excepted. It has been reverently and truly said—

'Was not our Lord a little child,
Taught by degrees to pray;
By father dear and mother mild
Instructed day by day?'

Yes, He was; we need not fear to say so, and in this lies the example for us. Each one of us, whether old or young, must remember that progress, improvement, going on, advance, change into something better and better, wiser and wiser, year by year; this is the only condition, the only way of our becoming like Christ, and, therefore, like God. Do not think that you will always be, that you must always be as you are now. No; you will grow up gradually to be something very different; you must increase and grow in mind as well as in body, in wisdom as well as in stature. The world moves, and you and all of us must move with it. God calls us and all ever to something higher and higher, and that higher stage you and I and the whole world must reach by steadily advancing towards it.

II. And then come three things especially which the text puts before us as those in which our Lord's earthly education, in which the advance and improvement of His earthly character, added to His youthful and childlike powers. First it speaks of His strength of character. It says He 'waxed strong in spirit.' Strong! What a word is that for all of you? You know—little boys especially know—how you value and honour those who are strong in body. The strong limb, the fleet foot, the sturdy arm, the active frame, you do well to value these things; they are God's gifts. The body which can endure blows without flinching, and which can toil without fatigue, which can win the race, or conquer in the game, or vanquish in the struggle; these are what you all wish to have. But what this strength is to the body, that strength of character is to the mind. A stout heart, that is what you want—a stout heart which will be able to resist all the temptations to do wrong, which scorns to tell a

lie, which will never consent to be betrayed into doing what is wrong; a strong, hardy conscience, which fixes itself on matters of real importance, and will not trifle, will not waste its powers on matters of no concern. Therefore, I say, be stronger and stronger every year. I could not say to you, perhaps, be stronger in body every year, for that is not within our own power to gain if we have it not; but we can say be stronger in spirit, be strong in mind, be strong in character, be stout in heart, for this does come by trying to have it. It comes by being always reminded that it will come if you strive to get it. It comes to those who are determined to seek it. Be strong, therefore, and very courageous.

III. And the next thing which the text speaks of is wisdom. It says the child was 'filled with wisdom.' Wisdom, as it were, was poured into Him, and His mind opened wider and wider to take it in. He drank in whatever wisdom there was in the knowledge of those about Him; He drank in the heavenly wisdom also which comes down from the fountain of all wisdom. You, too, have this to gain day by day. Those especially who are at school are sent to school for that very purpose, to have your minds opened, to take in all that your teachers can pour into it, to be ready for this instruction whenever it comes to you from books, from looking at what you see about you, from conversation, from experience as you grow older in life. You need not be old before your time, but you must even now be making the best use of your time. These are the golden days which never come back to you, which if once lost can never be entirely made up. Our great King Alfred used to regret in after years nothing so much as that owing to his long wanderings and troubles when he was young he had not had the opportunity of regular instruction at school. Seek, therefore, for wisdom, pray for it, determine to have it, and God, who gives to those who ask for it, will give it to you. Try to gain it as our Lord gained it when He was a child, by hearing, and by asking questions. By hearing; that is, by being teachable, and humble, and modest, by fixing your attention on what you have to learn. And also as He did, by asking questions; that is, by trying to know the meaning of what you learn, by cross-questioning yourselves, by inquiring right and left to fill up the blanks in your minds. Nothing is more charming to see than a little child listening, not interrupting, but eager to hear what is taught. Nothing is more charming than to see a little child asking questions. That is the very way in which we are able to know whether you take in what has been taught you.

IV. And the next thing is the grace or favour of God, or, as it says at the end of the chapter, the grace, or favour, of God and man; the grace, the goodness, the graciousness of God, which calls

forth grace, and goodness, and graciousness in man. Our blessed Lord had this always, but even in Him it increased more and more. It increased as He grew older, as He saw more and more of the work which was given Him to do; He felt more and more that God was His Father, and that men were His brothers, and that grace and lovingkindness was the best and the dearest gift from God to man, and from man to man, and from man to God. He was subject to His parents; He did what they told Him; and so He became dear to them. He was kind, and gentle, and courteous to those about Him, so that they always liked to see Him when He came in and out amongst them. So may it be with you. Look upon God as your dear Father in heaven, who loves you, and who wishes nothing but your happiness. Look upon your schoolfellows and companions as brothers, to whom you must show whatever kindness and forbearance you can. Just as this beautiful building in which we are assembled is made up of a number of small stones beautifully carved, every one of which helps to make up the grace and beauty of the whole, so is all the state of the world made up of the graces and goodnesses not only of full-grown men and full-grown women, but of little children who will be, at least if they live, full-grown men and full-grown women. Remember, then, all you who are parents, remember still more especially all you who are children, remember this day; and if ever you are tempted to do wrong, or to be idle, or to be rude and careless, or to leave off saying your prayers, then think of your Saviour's good example.

A. P. STANLEY.

Christ and Old Age.

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation. S. Luke ii. 29, 30.

I. WE have here before us another of the Epiphanies of Jesus Christ. The gospels for these Sundays give us many specimens of His manifestation. His Epiphany to boyhood is one. His Epiphany to society is another. His Epiphany to disease is a third. His Epiphany to danger—can we fail, this week, to call it by its name, His Epiphany to perils by sea—is a fourth. His Epiphany to diseased minds is another. His Epiphany to a militant church—a church full of confusion, entanglement, and intermixture—is another. His Epiphany in glory is the last.

We ask you to ponder another of the Epiphanies of our Lord—not marked by a Sunday of its own, though it might have been—His Epiphany to old age.

It is given us in the text. The text is the 'Nunc Dimittis' of an old pilgrim and watchman of Israel, possessing, in beautiful union, the two saintly characteristics, not always equally prominent, 'just and devout,' and adding to them that third and crowning grace, of holy expectation, without which the character lacks its heavenliest feature, and dwells, with a too complacent contentment, on an earth which ought not to satisfy. 'Just, devout, waiting'—I know not where we shall find a fourth quality worthy to stand beside these in the maturity of God's servant.

'Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word;

'For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,

'Which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples,

'A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.'

It was the Epiphany of Jesus Christ to old age.

II. Few men, in the abstract, desire old age: few men, in their own experience, find it desirable. Like all things of importance—like success, like honour, like love—like sorrow, and pain, and death itself—it needs practising for. A good old age comes to no man by accident. Rare indeed, probably unexampled, is that natural sweetness, natural at once and durable, which could make the trials of protracted age light or enjoyable.

The influences of a good old age are incalculable. Let a man give himself to the work, and he may mould the young almost to his will. That sort of attention which is neither flattery nor affection, neither patronising nor spoiling, by which an old man makes a young man feel that he thinks him worth noticing, worth helping, worth listening to and answering—that he desires to do these things, and lives for the sake of transmitting and transfusing what God in a long lifetime has taught him—is of inestimable value.

III. I have spoken thus far almost as if natural gifts and graces might suffice for the apostleship of the aged. It is not so. Oh miserable, most miserable spectacle, an old age without Jesus Christ!

Jesus Christ, I know, died young—never grew old—never tasted the contempt or the insignificance of age—never knew what it was to lose one faculty, or to pass, in one single respect, into the imbecility of the superannuated. He, the Ancient of Days, is still, as ever, young with a perpetual youth: herein lies the virtue of His Epiphany to the aged. He tells of a world where they reckon not by years; where past and future are not; where a thousand years are as one day; where the wounds of mortal conflict are healed in one moment by the first tasting of the tree of life; where the weary limb, the

oppressed brain, the lost memory, the failing judgment, all alike recover themselves in the first sight of the Eternal, and are made new with that immortality which is the life of God. And He who tells of these things comes also with their foretaste. He draws nigh to the solitude, He comforts the isolation, He calms the irritation, He inspires the languor, He fills the void, which else would betray itself in flagging spirits, peevish murmurs, or vain, selfish, profitless memories: He comes into the old man's heart, with the winning love of the child, the stirring strength of the man, and the infinite inexhaustible sympathy of the sorrowful, the suffering, the crucified: He makes the age venerable, and the weakness dignified, and the dying-bed beautiful, and the last departure blessed, and the terrible funeral 'a door opened in heaven': the 'Nunc Dimittis' is echoed on high, and the bitter separation of earth is felt as the omen and augury of an everlasting reunion. DEAN VAUGHAN.

S. Luke ii. 25, 27.

I. SIMEON. The times were degenerate. The official clergy, mere officials. The true spirit is to be sought for in such times amongst obscure men, often of the lowest class. Simeon and Anna were representatives of a spontaneous (perhaps unordained) priesthood. The Holy Spirit at this moment makes him a true priest, and he opens his arms to receive the Child brought into the Temple.

II. His song (29-32). He regards himself as a sentinel, commanded to watch for, and announce the appearance of, the Sun of Righteousness. This done, he asks for his discharge: 'Now lettest Thou,' etc.

To the Gentiles, sunk in ignorance and darkness, Messiah comes as the Light.

To Israel, as the outcome of all the past spiritual yearnings, hopes, and aspirations, He is the Glory.

But woe to Mary (33-35) should her heart be possessed by a carnal satisfaction, a delusive hope, on hearing these words. A drop of bitterness is mixed with her deep and holy joy—never wanting in this world of sin—'A sword shall pierce through thine heart.' The old man knows his countrymen. He knew that beneath their external religion existed hypocrisy, avarice, hatred to God; and in the face of this holy Child this evil would show itself. 'The thoughts of many hearts would be revealed,' the venom would be poured forth, and the end would be catastrophe.

III. Anna (36-38) = one of 'those who looked for redemption.'

There were three classes of Jews:

1. The Pharisees (externally religious).
2. The Sadducees (the sceptics of the day).
3. The faithful (like Simeon and Anna, who quietly waited for the fulfilment of God's promises).

These obviously have their modern representatives.

Christ's Law of Purity.

And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord. S. Luke ii. 22.

THE solemn annual remembrance of the Purification is a festival, dear unconsciously to the heart of every mother who calls herself Christian, however humble her station may be, however ignorant her intelligence. There is no ceremony which has taken more unrelaxing hold of the working classes than the thanksgiving of women after childbirth; and these familiar domestic rites are in direct succession to that fortieth day after the birth of our Lord when the simple peasant Mother, acting on the faithful tradition of her royal ancestry, presented herself with her babe for their purification in the Temple at Jerusalem. Until that time she could not leave her house. The circumcision had taken place on the eighth day after the Nativity, and was a private rite, performed at Bethlehem, doubtless by Joseph himself, as head of the little obscure family. The idea of the purification of the Hebrew women, according to the divinely sagacious instinct of the ancient law of Moses, was that, though human affections were dear to the Almighty, although the family tie was the unit appointed by Himself as the beginning of all religion, and the true glory of all social arrangements, yet in the imperfect condition of human nature there remains much that is unlovely even in that which is best, and there is nothing in the changes and chances of human life which warns us more emphatically of our strange inheritance from the dust and from the lower forms of the creation than the pains and humiliations of childbearing.

I. There was long ago an appropriate ceremony, suitable, no doubt, to a simple and primitive age, but wholly impossible to a complex and multitudinous form of civilisation, of which there is one faint lingering echo in the popular appellation of this festival as Candlemas Day. Candles were universally carried about in popular recognition of the truth that in all things, in purity especially, we members of the kingdom of Christ are bound to shine as lights before the world; in symbolical appeal at the same time to the lamp

of a spotless and innocent life, kept, by the grace of God, always quietly and steadily burning. In the year 790 A.D., one of the chief glories of early English Christianity, the learned Alcuin of York, afterwards the ornament of the court of Charles the Great in Germany, described in a homily how the whole multitude of some Christian city, collecting together, devoutly celebrate the solemnity of Holy Communion, bearing a vast number of wax lights; and none enters any public place in the city without a taper in his hand. And in the year 1153, S. Bernard wrote how in his day all Christians went in procession, two by two, bearing candles in their hands, which were lighted, not at a common fire, but by one first consecrated in church for the purpose; how they that went out first returned last, and all the way they sang, 'Great is the glory of the Lord'; how they went two by two in commendation of charity and of a social life, for so our Saviour sent out His disciples; how they carried lights in their hands—first, to signify that our light should shine before men; secondly, that the thing which they did that day was especially in memory of the Wise Virgins, of whom the Mother of the Saviour might be called the chief, that went to meet their Lord with lamps lit and burning. And he went on to show how from that usage, and from the many lights set up in the Church that day, it was called Candlemas: that because our works should all be done in the holy fire of charity, therefore, the candles were lit with fire symbolically holy; how they that went out first returned last to teach humility, in honour preferring one another. Because God loved a cheerful giver, therefore they sang all the way. The procession itself was to teach them that we should not stand idle in the way of life, but go from strength to strength, not looking back to that which is behind, but reaching forward to that which is before, even the mark of the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus.

II. These ceremonies are no longer possible, needful, or desirable. Christianity has little ceremonial; it has forms, for forms are essential to order; but it does not attempt to reinforce the religion of the heart by the distractions of the mind.

But never can we afford to pass over anything that reminds us forcibly and specially of our great primary Christian duties. Certainly in the present age we have little reason to regard the festival of the purification of our affections, and the presentation of our bodies as a living sacrifice to God, as in any degree superfluous.

The Church of Christ has great forces to contend with in this matter, and it is only the presence of her Lord that can sustain her hope and courage. In those classes which ought to be the leaders of the people in all that is noble and pure, we cannot but observe a growing devotion to material enjoyment and a widely prevalent thirst

for self-indulgence, which were not so obvious in an older, a wiser, a more godly generation. The catchword of the day is the hope expressed that the friend or companion has had a good time. A day without excitement is to increasing numbers a day lost. The sober duties of domestic life are very largely disdained. Fashionable religion is to an increasing degree a mere perfunctory attendance at some musical ceremonial which has little or no effect on morals or conscience. Can we wonder that amongst such persons self-control in obedience to the ideal of purity and the law of Christ is but little recognised?

More seriously then, and more continuously than ever, are we each of us bound to maintain amongst our friends and acquaintance, in the solemn language of the fathers of our Church, that a life of purity is alone worthy of a being created in the image of God; that for Christians the obligation to strict self-control rests on the sacredness of the body as the temple of the Holy Ghost; that strict self-control in single life is not only commanded by God, but is the only healthy condition; that there is no difference between sex and sex in the moral responsibility for irregularity, but that on the man, as the stronger of will, must lie the heavier blame; that none known to be living an irregular life ought to be received as a Christian into Christian society; that on the upholding of the sanctity of marriage depends the moral health of the nation.

ARCHDEACON SINCLAIR.

The Gentiles' Light and Israel's Glory.

A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel. S. Luke ii. 32.

THE song of Simeon was very beautiful in its arrangement: first, the believer's personal appropriation of a promise, 'Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation'—next, the expansion of a Christian's catholic spirit, 'A light to lighten the Gentiles'—and then, the holy patriotism of a Jewish heart, 'And the glory of Thy people Israel.' All this—his own salvation—the conversion of the world—the final majesty of the Jews—Simeon's faith enabled him to see in the little infant Jesus, whom he held in his arms. And we scarcely know which to admire most—the comprehensiveness of the conception, or the order of the thoughts.

Before our eyes there lies now, outspread in all its fulness, the finished work of that Infant Saviour, developed into the Lord of life and glory. And what have we to do, but to read there still with Simeon's confidence, and in Simeon's sequence—first, each one for

himself, his own interest in Christ's saving work—then, the duty and the hope of the evangelisation of the whole world—and then, the predicted consummation of Israel's glory, in the acknowledgment and reception of the same Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, in that grand coming Jewish state, which will usher in the new heavens and the new earth.

And here the question will naturally come: What is the distinction, if any, between Christ as 'the light of the Gentiles,' and Christ as 'the glory of Israel'? Is it only a difference of degree? Light, growing into deeper intensity and glow, becomes glory. So, Christ illuminates, indeed, all people; but not with that lustre with which He will one day encircle Jerusalem. And it is, therefore, 'A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.'

Or—Is there a distinction in the thing itself? We have warrant to believe that, before the end of this dispensation, 'the knowledge of the glory of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea,' and that, in that way, the gospel will be 'a witness to all nations.' But we have no Scriptural authority whatever to say that, under the present dispensation, all the inhabitants of those nations will undergo real conversion of heart. Every statement of Scripture concerning the Second Advent, presupposes and involves the contrary. But at some time or other—I am not careful now to distinguish when—we have certain ground to expect that the whole Jewish nation, in its integrity, without exception, will be, every one of them, the Lord's true people. Now, universal diffusion of knowledge, is 'light'; the inner work of grace in the reflection of God in the heart, is 'glory.' And do we so arrive at it—'A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.'

Or, once more. The actual presence of the Lord in beauty and power is 'glory.' Where shall that presence be at the last? At Jerusalem. Very great will be the irradiation of the whole earth, when that glory is revealed on Zion. But still, it will be only the distant beam of a full meridian sun, which is blazing at Palestine—'A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.'

I. As Gentiles, then, we first take our subject, and we ask—What is our proper privilege and portion? And we have the answer—'Light'—Christ 'a light.' Of those simple words no one in this church will know the power who has never felt the narrowing-in of a moral darkness in his mind. But ask the man who has ever known a season of deep sorrow which shrouded all his earthly prospects, and left nothing before him but a thick night over the future, and one rayless expanse. Or, go to the man who has found himself ever shut up in a most inextricable perplexity in the

labyrinth of life, what path he should take for duty or for safety? Or, still more, hear the soul which, under the conscious hiding of God's countenance, has felt the shadows of conscience deepen over his spirit into the blackness of despair. And those are the men who will understand the words, Christ 'a light.'

And what is 'light'? The Apostle S. Paul replied, 'Whatever doth make manifest is light.' What does Christ make manifest?

It would be exceedingly difficult to calculate what have been the indirect effects of the gospel of Christ in our world. I believe that a right state of heart is so essential to the highest actings of the mind—or, in other words, that the grace of God in the soul is so necessary to the development of the understanding—that, intellectually, Christ has been in the most literal sense, the world's 'light.' And if it be answered, that the highest state of art and science has been reached by nations who yet did not know Christ, I answer, that that state of art and science was attended with so much moral degradation, with so much sheer ignorance respecting the chief concerns of man, with so much grossness of credulity, superstition, and idolatry, that we must hesitate, notwithstanding all its literature and all its tastes, to call it 'light.' And certain it is, that whenever the attempt has been made to civilise any nation, before that nation is evangelised, the enterprise has failed. Whereas, there is not a country in the whole world, which has been brought under the power of the gospel of Christ, but invariably, by a necessary law of cause and effect, civilisation has sprung up in its steps, and kept pace with its increase. Therefore Christ is 'light' to the whole world.

But the prophecy has been verified, again, in a much higher sense than this. The Lord Jesus Christ is the one only manifestation of the mind of the Father. What utter confusion was in the conceptions of the whole world respecting God! See them always, in the heathen world, making a god out of each single one of God's attributes—simply because they had no clew to harmonise those apparently conflicting attributes into one. Or, see the natural, untaught workings of every mind—how they cannot reconcile infinite justice with infinite love. One, beholding nothing but justice, sees no escape from despair. And another, beholding only love—lapses into faintness, or rushes into presumption. But Christ brings all into consistency and unity. He shows God 'just and the justifier'—just, infinitely just, in punishing the substitute, at the very moment when He stands forth absolutely love in pardoning the sinner. Oh for more of those rays of light, to make us know the Father!

II. And as that 'light' exhibits the mind of God, see next how it acts upon the human soul. You have seen the sun-light, in the

early days of spring, brooding over some dry and barren piece of earth on the hillside—how it seeks out its latent vitality, and makes it spring forth into vegetable life, till it covers the soil with its mantling verdure. Just so, the rays from the Sun of Righteousness, when they find their way down into a poor sinner's heart, summon out the energies of a new existence. The blade of feeling, the bud of resolution, the blossom of principle, the flower of holiness, the fruit of usefulness, follow in their season, and the dry heart has become like the very garden of the Lord.

And as from the mountains of hope, in the newly-awakened soul, the warm radiance of divine love flows down into the valley of its Achor, the whole soul keeps high festival, like the Jews of old, with 'light, and gladness, and joy, and honour,' with 'joy and gladness, a feast, and a good day'; and it learns, in the true evangelical sense, to sing, 'Light is sown for the righteous'—Christ is sown for the justified—'Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.'

And in the difficult mazes of life it is the same 'light' which shows the path. The believer finds the comfort of that too-often forgotten name of Christ, 'the Counsellor,' as the light falls on some word of the Bible, and makes it stand out clear as in a sunbeam—or a still small voice speaks in the silence of the waiting heart, 'This is the way, walk ye in it.' And the Christian is taught as he walks with firm step his now clear road, what that means, 'He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.'

And that first ray of dawn, when it streams in upon some poor weary penitent, who has been keeping watch all the night long in his guilty terror, oh! who shall say what is the promise and what is the conception of that breaking day of holiness and peace? And so it goes on—clearer and clearer manifestations of God's love, brighter and brighter beams of heaven, follow each on the other in never-ending succession—a shining path 'which shineth more and more to the perfect day,' because He is 'a light to lighten the Gentiles.'

JAMES VAUGHAN.

The Different Effects of Christ's Coming.

Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel.
S. Luke ii. 34.

THIS was a saying of the aged Simeon, when our Lord Jesus Christ was presented in the Temple on the occasion of his Mother's purification. Simeon took the divine Child in his arms,

and blessed God, and said, 'Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.' This burst of inspired song in the aged servant of God moved astonishment in Joseph, and even in Mary, although she had already, in her own *Magnificat*, from a somewhat different point of view, extolled the greatness of her son. Simeon's last words, 'the glory of Thy people Israel,' would have lingered in the memory of Mary and Joseph, as the last phrase of a gifted speaker often will linger on the listener's ear, but Simeon probably felt that his expressions required explanation. 'The glory of Israel' was a phrase already consecrated in religious language. It commonly meant the sacred presence or Shekinah between the cherubim over the ark of the covenant. Israel, as S. Paul in later years pointed out, had indeed many a prerogative among the nations. Israel was God's adopted family; Israel inherited the covenants—those early understandings between earth and heaven, of which the great patriarchs had been the favoured recipients. To Israel God had revealed, in its completeness, the moral law. Israel offered to God a worship, the nature and details of which had been divinely ordered. Israel, so rich in the past, was also the people of the future. The promises were its endowment for the coming ages, and, in the fathers or patriarchs Israel had not merely a store of precious memories, but a lasting possession. The patriarchs were the property of their descendants to the end of time; but the true glory of Israel was this—that its stock and blood, 'as concerning the flesh, Christ,' whose Incarnation the sacred presence over the ark prefigured—'Christ came who is over all, God blessed for ever.' All else that Israel was or had—its sacred books, its typical ritual, its ideal of righteousness in the moral law, its great saints and heroes—all else pointed on and up to this its supreme prerogative. The promised Christ was to be of the seed of David, according to the flesh; and this was fulfilled when Jesus came. 'The glory of Israel.' It was a phrase well calculated to take complete possession of Jewish imaginations when referred to Him in whom it had at length been satisfied.

I. Christ's coming into the world was not to have a uniform effect upon human souls. It would act on one soul in one way, and on another in another; it would act differently on the same soul at different periods of its history. 'This Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel.' Christ by His coming into the world does not bless everybody, though it is in His heart to do so. His goodwill is here limited by the free action of men. Men can, if they like, reject Him, and, in fact, they do. He is the glory of His

people at large, but of the individuals who compose it many will lose, as many will gain, by His coming among them. That is the sense of Simeon's words, 'Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel.'

And this, after all, is only to say that the spiritual world is not ruled mechanically. If Christ had come down from heaven as a simply resistless influence for good, so that men, do or be they what they might, could not but be bettered by Him, the result would have been clearly mechanical—just as mechanical as anything which is set going by steam power or by water power. And yet, even in vegetable or brute nature, some conditions are required, if the reinforcements of vital power are to be of much real use. The sun and the rain can do but little for the tree which is sickly or withered. The greenest pasturage cannot tempt the dying hind. There must be an existing capacity for being nourished in the tree or in the animal, if there is to be improvement. And much more does this law obtain in the spiritual world; for, being a self-determining spirit, man is free: he can accept or he can reject even the highest gifts of God: he is never coerced into excellence any more than he is coerced into wickedness: he is, in the highest sense of the word, master of his destiny. The truth, the grace of God, only act upon man with good results so far as man is willing that they should so act. God has made man free. He does not withdraw this prerogative of freedom even when it is used against man's best interests—even when it is used against himself; and the exercise of this freedom by man to accept or to reject even his own highest good explains the difference of the results of Christ's coming upon different souls. 'This Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel.'

II. And secondly, of the two effects of Christ's advent, Simeon mentions—and it is a point carefully to be noted—as first in order, the fall of many in Israel. It must strike us as bold to the very verge of paradox thus to associate His blessed name, who came to be the help and Saviour of men, with spiritual failure. And yet this language was in keeping with what prophecy might have led men to expect. Isaiah had said that the Lord Himself would be 'a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence' to both the houses of Israel; and this was shown to be the case again and again through the centuries of Israel's history. The worst faults of this people were occasioned by the misuse of privileges and opportunities designed to lead them up to God. Their table was made 'a snare to take themselves withal.' The things that should have been for their wealth became to them an occasion of falling. The despised prophets, the neglected sacrifices, the forgotten law—all these were steps in their downward course. What would happen when the greatest of all God's gifts was

bestowed on them? What would happen when He gave His best and choicest—when, after sending prophet after prophet, He said at length, in the fulness of time, 'They will reverence My Son'?

The prediction of Simeon was fulfilled, even when our Lord appeared as a public teacher. 'He was despised and rejected of men,' by the great majority of the Jewish people. The learned classes, the scribes, would have nothing to say to Him. The so-called religious public, the Pharisees, would have nothing to say to Him. The political religionists, the Herodians—they would have nothing to say to Him. The common people heard Him gladly in the early days of His ministry: but the time came when they, too, cried out, 'Let Him be crucified.' Only a few predestined souls—Peter, John, Mary Magdalene—these clung to Him. Others came very near: the great body fell away.

Now, what was the kind of fall which Christ thus occasioned to the majority of the Jewish people? It was not a fall from the profession of the religion of Moses. On the contrary, the Jews pleaded the profession of this religion as a reason for rejecting the claims of Christ. Nor was it a fall from morality. There was no great deterioration on this score in the generation which rejected Christ. To all appearance they remained what they had been. They resisted innovation—innovation as proclaimed by Christ and His disciples. They said that they had Abraham for their father—that they had the law of Moses for their rule of life—that they had the prophets to warn, to stimulate, to instruct them—that they had the Temple, with its divinely ordered ordinances, in which to worship. In clinging to these at all costs—in resisting all teaching which implied that these were not enough—how could they fall? Failure, apostasy, to a Jew, would have appeared to be looked for elsewhere among those who gave up their old religion and who adopted a new one. Their failure lay in falling away from the Christ when He had presented Himself to them. And why was this a falling away at all? Why was it not rather steadfastness to old convictions which deserved to be spoken of in very different terms? The answer is, because Jesus Christ was the true end and explanation of all Jewish history. Everything in that history pointed on to Him. He was the subject of the promises made to the patriarchs; He was the significance of the ritual prescribed by the law: He was the deliverer announced in the most various terms by successive prophets: He was the true outcome of the theocratic people, the people of religion, the people which, from age to age, had before its eyes an ideal of righteousness. And, therefore, to reject Him was to reject itself—to fall from all that its past implied—to fall from the guidance which God had vouchsafed it during successive centuries.

III. And, thirdly, Christ was also set for the rising of many in Israel. This was His original purpose in coming among us—a purpose which was only limited in its operation by the free but perverted will of man. When He, our Lord, had His own way with souls, it was to raise them to newness of life. He did not merely promote this resurrection in man. He was Himself—so He said—'the resurrection.' 'I am the resurrection and the life.' To come into contact with Him was to touch a life so intrinsically buoyant and vigorous that it transfused itself forthwith into the attracted soul, and bore it onwards and upwards. 'Risen with Christ' is an expression applied by S. Paul to Christians on this side the grave; and the rising of many in Israel, of which Simeon spoke, was not the future resurrection of their bodies, but the present moral and spiritual resurrection of their souls. Something like this power is felt—but felt, of course, at an infinitely remote distance—in the case of any eminently good man. Good men do, by their mere presence, by their looks, by their words, by their unconscious ways, draw those of us who are privileged to be with them upwards towards that world in which they habitually live. In our Lord's case, while He was on earth, this power which went out of Him was unlike any witnessed before or since, and He exerts it still, though over the invisible world, and through agencies which appeal less powerfully to the imagination, or, rather, to the senses.

The gospel tells us of several for whose rising again Christ was set. It was true of each disciple that persevered: it was conspicuously true of the poor Magdalene whom He rescued from the grasp of seven devils: it was true of Peter who denied Him—true of Thomas who would not for a while believe His word. But in none of His servants is this attractive power of the Redeemer, mighty to raise from sin and from death, more gloriously displayed than in S. Paul. S. Paul had fallen, so as to be, in his own estimate, the very chief of sinners. He had been, he says, a blasphemer and a persecutor. He was not, he felt, even in later years, when he had worked so long, when he had suffered so much, worthy to be called an apostle, because he had persecuted the Church of God But if Christ had provoked him at the first to a bitter hostility, the time came when He, by His controlling grace, inspired His poor servant with a passionate affection, which controlled and absorbed all the faculties of his being. The point at which this great change took place is called his conversion. In Simeon's language, it was his rising again after his fall; and thus in his own person S. Paul experienced this double effect of the advent of Christ into the world—first, the repulsion which made him so bitter a persecutor, and next the attraction which made him so glorious an apostle—first the fall, and then the moral resurrection.

We are too apt, it may be, to think of Christ's first coming as of a

thing that is past and gone. In one sense it is so. Eighteen centuries and a half have passed since He was here visibly among us, and yet we know He is with us now. He came to be with His people, not for thirty-three years only, but for all time. We must, sooner or later, look the greatest of all our responsibilities in the face—our responsibility for having known whatever individually we have known of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This is the talent of talents for which the Great Householder one day will call us most strictly to account. Christ is set for the fall or rising of each single human being. His will is that we all should rise. Do not let us balk His gracious purposes. Rather, while yet we may, let us cling by faith, by love, by sincere repentance, to His pierced hands, that we may have a part in the first, the moral resurrection, and then, by His grace and mercy, in the second beyond it. H. P. LIDDON.

Set for the Fall and Rising of Mary.

And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary His mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel: and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. S. LUKE ii. 34-35.

I. THE words of my text were spoken of no ordinary man or no ordinary child. There was an aged man in Jerusalem, righteous and devout, named Timoratus, the Vulgate renders it. He was looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him, and it had been revealed unto him by the same Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Day after day we may, without any undue stretch of fancy, imagine he had waited earnestly and confidently for the revelation of the Christ; for long it seemed to tarry, and he cries, 'O watchman, will the night of sin be never past? O watchman, doth the tarrying day begin to dawn? Will it disperse the long mists of sense in which I dwell?' What a feverish spirit there was abroad in those days every reader of history knows well. In all the East there was a searching spirit abroad, as it appeared to be known that from the land of Jewry there should arise some mighty monarch. Men's hearts were looking forward to something, they knew not exactly what. There was an uneasy spirit astir, which led King Herod to be very anxious about that young Child's life. Even amongst unbelieving Jews there was a vague suspicion, a timorous apprehension that some notable day was to come, and amongst the faithful Israelites there was something far beyond this, something far better in every sense of the word—higher, deeper, truer. It was the 'con-

solation of Israel' for which they were looking—for One to come who should speak comfortably unto Jerusalem, and say unto her that her warfare was accomplished, that her iniquity was pardoned. Who can doubt that these people were very earnest in their devotions? Fearing the Lord, they spoke often one to another, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them who feared the Lord and thought upon His name. They were looking for their redemption, and the day of their redemption was drawing very near. It may have been years that Simeon had been looking forward to the fulfilment of the promise, and day by day he went home—who could doubt it?—refreshed and strengthened. But he had not received the promise—until at last it came. On the day of the Presentation the Spirit bade him go to the Temple as usual, and there he saw the parents and the Child—no pomp, no outward show, no observation—but a child of earth apparently, attended by father and mother of ordinary rank it would seem, and yet that holy Child was the Saviour of the world! Immediately the Spirit bade him join himself to the company. He knew within himself by the inspiration of the same Spirit that after all his anxious waiting the promise which he had desired to see fulfilled was then fulfilled before his eyes, and having seen the Lord's Christ, the consolation of Israel, he was willing to depart, thankful that his Father had granted unto him his promise. Then, as the Child is lying in the arms of the aged saint, at the time, too, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Simeon points to Him and addresses His Mother in the words of my text—'Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against.'

II. Let us think upon each of the statements in the text, and first for the falling. You cannot turn over the pages of Scripture without seeing instances of this—of the way in which Israel rejected Him. We read of one incident in the beginning of His ministry. 'Verily I say unto you that a prophet is not accepted in his own country,' and immediately the whole of the synagogue fires up and thrusts Him out of the city, leads Him to the brow of a hill upon which it stood, that they might cast Him down headlong. And as it was in the beginning of His ministry, so it was all through it. Time after time they seek with all manner of subtlety to destroy Him from amongst them. It is impossible not to see that the Pharisees were always thirsting for His blood. They might abide their time, and so avoid an uproar amongst the people; but we see continual traces of their eagerness to shed His blood. Though He did so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him, that the saying of Isaiah might be fulfilled, 'Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' He was a stone at which they stumbled.

But is it not far more delightful to dwell for a few moments on the other side of the picture?—to think of paradise regained, if we are able to realise paradise lost? Surely for friend and for foe the Child was set for the raising up. What was His carriage towards the people at large? Will His conduct bear out the text, 'Come unto Me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light.' Who was it to whom He said, in answer to a captious criticism of Simon and his friends, when He accepted an invitation to sit down to meat in a mixed company at Simon's house, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee; thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace'? I think we must have seen that for all classes in Israel the Child was set for the rising again of many, even as He was set for the fall of many and for a sign which was to be spoken against.

III. With respect to the prophecy in which the Virgin Mother was addressed, 'Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,' I find various translations to which I do not attach much importance. There are some who consider that they see in the words the struggle which should arise in her heart as she saw Him day by day 'despised, rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,' and at the last taken up from earth. There are, again, those who see in the passage a representation of the struggle of Israel in the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. The sharp pangs of sorrow must pierce her heart also, who was but mortal like all the rest of the world, conceived and born in sin. This does not seem to me to have been in the aged Simeon's mind when he uttered these words. As his eyes swept through the coming years the reflection upon the pain and agony which he knew to be in store for the Child naturally led him to express a feeling of sympathy for the Mother.

It is still true that the Child was set for the rising and falling of many. I know that each one of us may wish that we could fly for consolation from the consciousness of many, many falls. I am bruised by a deep sense of my own unworthiness; bruised by the consciousness of guilt; bruised by the hiding of God's face; I go forward and He is not there; backward, and I cannot see Him; on the left hand, behold, He hideth Himself; and on the right hand, I cannot see Him; and yet my Saviour loves me! He was manifest that I might be saved. He will not break the bruised reed: He is set for my rising again: then I will arise. I will remember that it is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again. I will pray Him to purify my heart for His habitation, that it may be meet for Him to dwell in.

BISHOP ATLAY.

Printed by T. and A. Constable, Printers to His Majesty
at the Edinburgh University Press

GTU Library
3 2400 00280 1383

DATE DUE

SEP 2 2 1998

SEP 2 2 1998

GAYLORD

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

15869

15869

GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION LIBRARY
BERKELEY, CA 94709